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For some royals it was business as usual yesterday, with the Prince and Princess of Wales taking Prince George and Princess Charlotte to carols at Westminster Abbey

Harry deepens rift with 'screaming' William jibe

● Sandringham clash revealed in Netflix series ● There may be no way back, say royal insiders

Valentine Low

Prince Harry's relationship with his brother may be damaged beyond repair after he accused the Prince of Wales of "screaming and shouting" at him at a Sandringham summit and briefing against him, royal insiders believe.

There are signs, however, that Harry's stance towards his father may be softening, a source said.

Despite the ferocity of the Sussexes' attacks — including a claim by Harry that the Palace told lies to protect his brother — last night the royal household was determined to weather the storm by refusing to make any public statement on the Netflix documentary *Harry & Meghan*. This was taken as a sign that Buckingham Palace believes nothing in the six-episode series is serious enough to warrant any comment that could escalate the situation.

The Palace also took heart from the warmth of the crowd's reception — including cries of "We love you" — as the royal family put on a show of unity at the Princess of Wales's carol concert at Westminster Abbey last night, attended by the King and Queen.

Hours earlier Netflix had released the final volume of its series about the Sussexes. This included Harry discussing the summit at Sandringham in January 2020, when he negotiated his and Meghan's departure from frontline royal duties. "It was terrifying to have my brother scream and shout at me and my father say things that just simply weren't true," he says.

Harry also accuses the King's office of leaking news of the couple's planned departure. But one insider believes the duke spoke sufficiently warmly of his father — praising his contribution to their wedding, with Meghan describing him as "charming" — to suggest signs of a rapprochement. "It seems to me like he has softened," the source said.

The insider dismissed some of Harry's claims, saying the Netflix series "presents a version of events which does not tally with the recall of those who were there … never was the phrase 'some recollections may vary' more appropriate". They added: "It was sad to see how far apart the brothers are. His brother has moved into the crosshairs as the No 1 target."

Sally Bedell Smith, the royal biographer, said of the Netflix series: "There was a lot of whining, a lot of self-aggrandisement … and massive over-sharing of private moments that were staged for the cameras."

A former royal insider noted that the Sussexes speak of wanting "peace" and not just truth. "Fine … let's move on. People are running out of patience."

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Ambulance strikes set to pose biggest threat of all

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor
Kat Lay Health Editor
Eleanor Hayward Health Correspondent

Strikes by ambulance workers next week pose the biggest danger yet to patients from the winter wave of walkouts, according to health leaders.

As thousands of nurses joined picket lines across the country in freezing weather yesterday, senior NHS figures were planning for mass cancellations of routine care next week.

Elderly people who fall during the paramedics' walkout may not be sent help until they have spent four hours on the floor, according to agreements drawn up in the south of England.

In the first deal reached between an ambulance trust and the GMB union, heart attack and stroke patients will get an ambulance only if treatment is deemed "time-critical".

Sir Jim Mackey, NHS England's director of elective recovery, said: "The ambulance strike is a completely different order of magnitude of risk."

He told the King's Fund think tank: "If we were to give guidance today, the only guidance we could give would be to cancel absolutely everything. I think we'll just have to take it day by day … if, at some point, there is a case for a blanket order, we'll consider that."

Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, said health bosses were looking to next week with trepidation, adding: "As strike action escalates, the risk to patient harm increases … the commitment to protecting life and limb is going to become increasingly difficult to manage."

He admitted that he feared a "stalemate" between ministers and unions for the foreseeable future.

Dame Ruth May, England's chief nurse, added to pressure on ministers as she joined striking workers outside St Thomas' hospital in Westminster. "I'm urging the government to work with [health unions] to make sure they get a resolution on pay," she said.

The prime minister's spokesman said of May's appearance on the picket line: "She doesn't work for the government. She's not a minister. Obviously she has her own view as chief nurse."

Pat Cullen, head of the Royal College of Nursing, said she felt the day marked "a turning point in the campaign for fair nursing pay", with calls to reopen negotiations "from unexpected places". Those calling for more talks included Conservative MPs and a former chairman of the NHS pay review body, who said its recommendations were based on outdated evidence.

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William shouted and my father

David Brown

The Duke of Sussex has claimed that Prince William "screamed" at him while their father said "things that simply weren't true" at a family summit.

A crisis meeting was attended by the Queen at Sandringham in January 2020 after Harry and Meghan said they wanted to start a new life in Canada.

"It was terrifying to have my brother scream and shout at me and have my father say things that simply weren't true and my grandmother quietly sit there and sort of take it all in," Harry says in the latest episodes of the couple's Netflix series, released yesterday. "You have to understand that from a family's perspective, especially from hers [the late Queen's]. There are ways of doing things and her ultimate mission goal/responsibility is the institution."

He adds: "The saddest part of it was the wedge created between myself and my brother, so that he is on the institution's side. That's his inheritance. So to some extent it is ingrained in him that part of his responsibility is the survivability and continuity of this institution."

Harry describes his anger when the Palace issued a statement in his name, but without his knowledge, denying he had been bullied by William, now the Prince of Wales.

"I couldn't believe it," Harry says. "No one had asked me. No one had asked me to put my name to a statement like that."

He describes calling Meghan, who burst into "a flood of tears, because within four hours they [the Palace] were happy to lie to protect my brother and yet for three years they were never willing to tell the truth to protect us."

Harry claims a private letter to his father in which he set out his plans to start a new life in Canada was leaked to the media at the start of January 2020.

"In one of those I had mentioned that, you know, that if this wasn't going to work then we were willing to relinquish our Sussex titles if need be," he says. The story later appeared in The Sun.

"It became clear that the institution, he leaked the fact we were going to be moving back to Canada. And the key piece of that story that made me aware that the contents of the letter had been leaked is we were willing to relinquish our Sussex titles."

Harry says that he had been due to meet the Queen at Sandringham on January 6 but she told him she was busy all week.

He also accuses his father and brother of focusing on a "misinterpretation" of his situation and suggests they owe him an apology.

Harry flew from California to London to attend the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh in April last year and walked with his father and brother behind his grandfather's coffin.

"It was hard. Especially spending time, having chats with my brother and my father, who just, you know, were very much, focused on the same misinterpretation of the whole situation.

"So neither, none of us really wanted to talk about it at my grandfather's funeral, but we did. And, you know, I have had to make peace with the fact we're probably never gonna get genuine accountability or a genuine apology.

"You know, my wife and I. We are moving on. We are focused on the, on what's coming next."

Harry and Meghan should renounce their titles, leading article, page 33





Harry and Meghan show scenes from their wedding in the documentary — the cutting of the cake, the couple raising a glass, and their first dance together



In the aftermath of the Oprah interview, Harry shows Meghan a message from William on his mobile phone and appears upset







The couple chose to share intimate pictures of bathtime with their baby son; Archie and Lilibet with Harry on a sofa and a newborn Lilibet sleeping, right

Charles leak claim speaks to souring of relationship

Mario Ledwith

In one of the most explosive claims in the Netflix documentary, Prince Harry suggests that his father was involved in leaking a story about his and Meghan's plans to leave Britain.

The claim highlights the huge shift in the couple's relationship with the King, whose role in their 2018 wedding is earlier lovingly described by Meghan.

Referring to him as "very charming", she tells how she asked him to walk her down the aisle at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. "I said to him, like, 'I've lost my dad in this'," she said. "So, him as my father-in-law was really important to me."

The couple also credit the King with helping to organise key elements of the ceremony, such as the orchestra, which Harry said "made all the difference", and the Kingdom Choir, a gospel group.

Meghan outlines the closeness of her relationship with the late Queen, who put a blanket over their legs in the car after a royal engagement together. She said it felt "like family".

Negative stories 'planted by

David Brown

Jealousy at the public popularity of the Duchess of Sussex led to rival royal media teams placing negative stories about her, Harry claimed.

He says the penny dropped when Meghan appeared in front-page coverage of an event at Buckingham Palace while the Duchess of Cambridge was relegated to a secondary position.

"The issue is, when someone who's marrying in, who should be a supporting act, is then stealing the limelight, or is doing the job better than the person who was born to do this, that upsets people," he says in the Netflix series. "It shifts the balance, because you've been led to believe the only way that your charities can succeed, the only way that your reputation can be grown or improved, is if you're in the front page of those papers."

Lucy Fraser, a friend of Meghan, says the situation changed after the couple's tour of Australia and New Zealand in October 2018. "They were so popular, so popular with the public, that internals at the palace were incredibly threatened by that," she says.

Harry says that rival royal PR teams supplied negative stories about other family members. "If the comms team want to remove a negative story about

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said things that were not true



NETFLIX



Archie as a tousle-haired toddler, above, and with Lorren Khumalo, the nanny who looked after him







royal rivals'

their principal, they will trade and give [the press] something about someone else's principal, so the offices end up working against each other," he says. "William and I both saw what happened in our dad's office, and we made an agreement we would never let that happen to our office."

However, he says that his brother's press office did "the very same thing that we promised the two of us would never, ever do".

Meghan adds: "You would just see it play out. Like a story about someone in the family would pop up for a minute and [the palace would think] 'Got to make that go away'."

Jenny Afia, the couple's lawyer, claims: "I've certainly seen evidence that there was negative briefing from the palace against Harry and Meghan to suit other people's agendas."

Our Lilibet has got my mother's eyes, says Harry

Mario Ledwith

The Duke of Sussex has revealed that his daughter Lilibet reminds him of his mother.

Prince Harry said that his second-born child had Diana's eyes and Spencer family characteristics. Speaking lovingly about his children in the Netflix documentary, he added: "I think at the moment I see a lot of my wife in Archie. I see a lot of my mum in Lili. She's very Spencer-like. She's got the same blue eyes, sort of like a golden-reddish hair."

Lilibet, aged 18 months, takes her middle name of Diana from her late grandmother. Her first name was a nickname given to Queen Elizabeth II when she was a child and used by close family members.

The final episode of the Netflix series features a video of Harry and Meghan's younger child crawling at the family's home in the US. Meghan tells the documentary: "There was something that felt so complete once we had Lilibet."

The series also reveals that Tyler Perry, the film mogul who let the couple decamp to his $18 million Beverly Hills mansion in 2020, is Lilibet's godfather. Recalling how the Sussexes asked him on the phone, he said: "I had to take a minute to take that in. And I thought, 'I'd be honoured. I'd absolutely be honoured'." He admitted, however, that he had refused to travel to the UK for the christening.

Lots of anger … but little evidence

Analysis

Watching the last three episodes of Harry & Meghan is, as the old football cliché goes, a game of two halves (Valentine Low writes).

First of all, it is impossible not to feel some sympathy for the couple. It is painful to hear of Meghan's suicidal thoughts, and to watch Harry talk about the disintegration of his relationship with his brother. In the aftermath of the Oprah Winfrey interview, Harry gets a message from William, which he shows to Meghan (but not the camera).

He is clearly upset. "I don't know what to do," he says. It is an excruciating moment, and as a viewer one feels almost like a voyeur intruding on something incredibly personal — but something personal that Harry and Meghan felt able to share with the world.

It is also worth remembering that there were a lot of negative stories in the press about her and, regardless of whether they were true or not — some certainly were — that can be hard to deal with. When the duchess talks about the social media attacks on her, and the death threats, her voice cracks and a tear runs down her cheek.

It is also good to have a reminder of the good Meghan could do. Her work with the Grenfell community kitchen was groundbreaking and valuable. She could have been a great asset to the royal family.

But then the questions start to creep in. When Harry talks about his brother "screaming" at him at the Sandringham summit and his father saying things that weren't true, does he stop to consider the effect of his words on his family? Or is he so far gone that he simply does not care any more?

The biggest question of all, though, is this. Harry and Meghan — and their friends and acolytes — throw plenty of dirt at the royal family. But where are the specifics? What is the evidence for all of this?

Their friend Lucy Fraser is wheeled out to give voice to the argument that the rot started after their tour of Australia in 2018. They were so popular after that, she says, that "internals at the Palace" felt threatened. Harry talks of him and Meghan being the supporting act who were "stealing the limelight" and "doing the job better than someone who was born to do this".

That, he said, "upsets people" and shifts the balance. It is a blatant attack on his brother, who he is in effect accusing of condoning press briefings against the couple because he was so jealous of their popularity.

Yet the evidence for those negative press briefings seems pretty thin. Jenny Afia, the duchess's solicitor, describes it as a "war against Meghan", and says she has seen evidence there was negative briefing from the Palace against the pair to suit other people's agendas. That evidence seems to consist of a witness statement that Ted Verity, editor of The Mail on Sunday, gave in Meghan's legal action against the paper, in which he talked about having a briefing from a "senior member of the royal household". That briefing included several things that later turned out to be true, including that there were several drafts of a letter Meghan wrote to her father (which was at the centre of the court case) and that Harry and Meghan's staff helped the authors of a book about the couple.

One incident that stands out in their narrative is the way the Palace dealt with a story in The Times on the eve of the Sandringham summit that said the couple regarded themselves as having been pushed away by the "bullying" attitude of Prince William.

According to a source who knows the couple well, they wanted to step away from their royal role after two years of "constantly being told their place". William and Harry's press representatives got together to put out a statement in the brothers' names condemning the story as "false" and its language as "offensive and potentially harmful".

But neither of them had told William or Harry they were putting out the statement. Harry says: "I couldn't believe it. No one had asked me … I rang M and I told her and she burst into floods of tears. Because within four hours they were happy to lie to protect my brother and yet for three years they were never willing to tell the truth to protect us."

Lie? Was the lie that the statement was in Harry and William's names? Or did he not like them saying that his brother wasn't a bully?

There is another implicit accusation relating to The Times, again related to bullying: this time, the paper's revelation that one of the couple's senior aides had accused Meghan of bullying her staff. James Holt, executive director of their Archewell Foundation, says: "The timing of the bullying story has even been admitted by the journalist who wrote it, that it was done explicitly because of the Oprah interview."

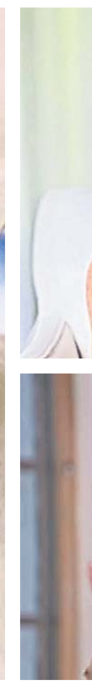
The way he puts it, it sounds as if the author of the story — me — was confessing to a nasty conspiracy to derail the Sussexes from telling their truth. That is woefully misleading. I made it completely clear in my front-page story at the time, and in subsequent broadcast interviews, that the victims of the alleged bullying wanted to get their story out before the Oprah interview. If they didn't, Meghan would control the narrative and their complaints would be lost in the noise. I did not "admit" anything: I was completely upfront about it.

Harry and Meghan have legitimate grievances but too much of their story is full of half-truths and unanswered questions. Meanwhile, his father and brother continue to keep their silence. They do not feel that a television series is the way to heal the wounds that have been inflicted on both sides.

Prince lays blame for miscarriage on battle with media







Mario Ledwith

The Duke of Sussex says that his wife had a miscarriage because of a legal battle with the publishers of The Mail on Sunday.

The duchess says in the Netflix documentary that she miscarried on the first morning after the couple had moved into a new home in Santa Barbara, California, in July 2020 as the dispute over the handwritten letter to her father continued. "I was pregnant and I really wasn't sleeping and the morning when I woke up in our new home is when I miscarried," she says.

At the time Meghan was working until 3am, speaking to her lawyer about the successful privacy case against Associated Newspapers, which also publishes Mail Online and the Daily Mail.

In the final episode of the Netflix documentary, Harry says: "I believe my wife suffered a miscarriage because of what the Mail did. I watched the whole thing. Now, do we absolutely know that the miscarriage was created, caused by that? Course we don't. But bearing in mind the stress that that caused, the lack of sleep and the timing of the pregnancy, how many weeks in she was, I can say, from what I saw, that miscarriage was created by what they were trying to do to her."

The duchess disclosed the fact that she had miscarried in an article for The New York Times in November 2020 in which she discussed her grief. She said in that article that she had "dropped to the floor in pain" while changing Archie's nappy. "I knew as I clutched my firstborn child that I was losing my second," she wrote. She later described "watching her husband's heart break as he tried to hold the shattered pieces of mine".

In December Associated agreed "financial remedies" with Meghan over the privacy claim against articles in The Mail on Sunday in 2019 that reproduced parts of the "personal and private" letter to her estranged father, Thomas Markle. The duchess was awarded £1 nominal damages, along with an undisclosed sum that she donated to charity.

An appeal against the decision was dismissed and Associated was also ordered to publish a front-page apology and pay the duchess's legal costs.

The dispute with Associated features prominently in the Netflix documentary. In one scene Meghan is at a computer where she says she is "writing more things to battle the Mail and their insanity".

The couple accuse the media company of taking the issue to court rather than issuing an apology, in an effort to "make a fortune" from them through reporting the legal process.

Harry says: "They will always push, because they will use a privacy litigation to further invade your privacy, like they did with my wife.

"But my mum always said, 'If they're writing crap about you in the tabloids, you're probably doing the right thing. So I've always felt as though this was a fight worth fighting for."

In another section, Harry films his wife in a car after she has received a copy of Associated's skeleton argument in the case as she shakes her head.

Jenny Afia, a partner at the London law firm Schillings who represented the duchess, describes late-night conversations with Meghan during the legal battle. "She'd be awake, unable to sleep, thinking about this case, and the wider issues, and the toll it was taking," she says in the documentary.

The documentary features a segment filmed by Harry that shows Meghan in pyjamas phoning her UK legal team at 2am for the results of the appeal lodged by the newspaper.

The couple's daughter Lilibet was born in June last year.

In October it emerged that Prince Harry is part of a group suing the publishers of the Daily Mail in the latest allegations over phone hacking. Harry is also suing Associated over other articles in The Mail on Sunday.

Beyoncé sang praises by text

David Brown, Mario Ledwith

The superstar singer Beyoncé texted Meghan to praise her "bravery and vulnerability" and said she was "selected to break generational curses" after alleging racism in the royal family.

The message came after the couple said in an interview with Oprah Winfrey that a senior royal had asked about the colour of their unborn baby. In the final episode of their Netflix series, Meghan says: "I thought me being very open about the depression I experienced and just how extreme that became, that would be the biggest takeaway. But it was entirely eclipsed by the conversation surrounding race."

The day after the Winfrey interview, the couple were filmed sitting at a table when Meghan says Beyonce has contacted her. Harry lifts his hands in astonishment and says, "Shut up!" before adding: "Just checking in, just casual." Meghan continues: "I still can't believe she knows who I am. She said she wants me to feel safe and protected. She admires and respects my bravery and vulnerability and thinks I was selected to break generational curses that need to be healed." Harry replies: "That is well said."

Meghan also describes how it was a flight cabin crew member who first acknowledged her "sacrifice" for the UK as she left for Canada. She reveals he knelt by her seat, took off his hat and said: "We appreciate everything you did for our country."

'Queen advised me to write to my dad'

David Brown

The Duchess of Sussex claims that she was advised by Queen Elizabeth to write a letter to her estranged father, which was leaked to the press.

Meghan said she wrote to Thomas Markle in August 2018 after his co-operation with paparazzi photographers just before her wedding that May was revealed.

She told Netflix: "So I reached out to Her Majesty and said, 'This is what's going on. What do you want me to do? I want whatever advice you have', but ultimately it was suggested by the Queen [and] the Prince of Wales that I write my dad a letter."

She said she went to great efforts to get the letter to her father discreetly.

In her letter Meghan told her father: "Your actions have broken my heart into a million pieces" and urged him to "please stop lying, please stop creating so much pain, please stop exploiting my relationship with my husband".



The Duchess of Sussex says the Queen suggested she write to her father

Extracts of the letter appeared in The Mail on Sunday.

Meghan said her "entire centre was rocked to its core" after she was confronted by a woman during a royal walkabout in Liverpool who told her: "What you're doing to your father is not right."

Harry said the newspaper printed the extracts believing the royal family would encourage Meghan not to sue.

"People still scratching their heads going, 'How would the Mail have either the stupidity, or whatever you want to call it, to print a letter between a daughter and a father?'," he said.

"Well, the answer is simple: they knew the family would encourage us not to sue."

The duke compared his wife's position with that of his mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, during her marriage. "Back in the day, my mum was in the back of the car going to engagements in floods of tears," he said.

"And then my dad is saying, 'We are almost there' and 30 seconds to wipe the tears away, slap on some make-up, and then the door opens and smile and everything is fine."

Suits co-star takes credit for US magazine defence

Mario Ledwith

An actress friend of the Duchess of Sussex has admitted it was her idea to co-ordinate an infamous defence of the royal in People magazine that later played a key part in a battle with The Mail on Sunday newspaper.

Abigail Spencer, who appeared alongside Meghan Markle in the US television drama *Suits*, said she was growing increasingly concerned about her friend's mental health as she struggled to deal with royal life.

The American actress said Meghan was going through a "really dark time" so she approached another friend, Silver Tree, saying they "should do something".

In the *Harry & Meghan* documentary on Netflix, Spencer said one of her closest friends "just so happened" at the time to be the editor of People, the weekly US celebrity magazine. She said that a group of five friends wanted to turn around the narrative surrounding Meghan.

Describing the plan for the piece, she said: "It will just be her closest friends coming together to talk about the person, who she really is, in the middle of this shitstorm."

There was fevered speculation about how the article came about at a time when Meghan was the subject of numerous critical reports. Some suggested Buckingham Palace and Meghan herself were involved in it.

The article was headlined "Her best friends break their silence: the truth about Meghan" and featured unnamed friends saying they were standing up



NETFLIX

Turmoil over the 'bullying' article just before Oprah

Valentine Low

One of the top advisers to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex has questioned the motivation of The Times in publishing allegations that the duchess bullied members of her staff.

The Times reported in March last year that Jason Knauf, the couple's communications secretary, had written a memo to the duchess saying that she had driven two personal assistants out of the household and was undermining the confidence of a third member of staff.

The story was published on March 3, four days before the couple's television interview with Oprah Winfrey.

The headline was: "Royal aides reveal Meghan bullying claim before interview."

James Holt, executive director of Harry and Meghan's Archewell Foundation, tells the Netflix documentary *Harry & Meghan*: "The timing of the bullying story has even been admitted by the journalist that wrote it that it was done explicitly because of the Oprah interview."



Royal aides reveal Meghan bullying claim before interview

EXCLUSIVE

Valentine Low

Meghan's friend Abigail Spencer, an American actress who appeared with her in *Suits*, says: "You could tell I was like, 'Oh my gosh, someone's panicking over there'."

In remarks that appear to suggest he believes Buckingham Palace was behind the leak, Harry adds: "I can't think what my mum went through all those years ago by herself. To see this institutional gaslighting that happens … it's extraordinary.

"And that's why everything that's happened to us was always going to happen to us. Because if you speak truth to power, that's how they respond."

A spokesperson for the duchess said in a statement at the time: "Let's just call this what it is: a calculated smear campaign based on misleading and harmful misinformation.

"The duchess is saddened by this latest attack on her character, particularly as someone who has been the target of bullying herself and is deeply committed to supporting those who have experienced pain and trauma."

However, the duchess does not address in the Netflix episode the substance of the bullying allegations.

Less than 24 hours after the original story was published, Buckingham Palace announced that it was carrying out an investigation into the bullying claims.

The Palace said in a statement: "We are clearly very concerned about allegations in The Times following claims made by former staff of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

"Accordingly our HR team will look into the circumstances outlined in the article. Members of staff involved at the time, including those who have left the household, will be invited to participate to see if lessons can be learnt.

"The royal household has had a dignity-at-work policy in place for a number of years and does not and will not tolerate bullying or harassment in the workplace."

However, in June, Buckingham Palace said it would not be releasing the results of the investigation.

The Palace, which has been accused repeatedly of "burying" the report into the bullying claims made against the duchess, said its review was "confidential".

It said that "lessons have been learnt" in the review, but refused to say what those lessons were.

There was speculation that the Palace's main concern was to avoid risking further confrontation with the duke and duchess.

The complaint, which was submitted in October 2018, also expressed concern about the stress being experienced by Samantha Cohen, the couple's private secretary.

The email was sent by Knauf to Simon Case, who was the then Duke of Cambridge's private secretary and is now the cabinet secretary, before being passed to the HR department based at Clarence House.







The couple discuss Meghan's miscarriage; and are seen watching their interview on Oprah, left. Meghan's mother, Doria, cries as she tells of her daughter's despair. Other footage shows the duchess awaiting a court ruling on her letter to her father, right, and Harry's shock at a text from the singer Beyoncé

"against the global bullying". "Meg has silently sat back and endured the lies and untruths," one ally said.

The February 2019 article also played a focal part in Meghan's bitter legal dispute with The Mail on Sunday, having contained the first reference to a letter written by Meghan to her father, Thomas Markle. She later sued Associated Newspapers, publisher of The Mail on Sunday, for revealing the contents of the letter.

Associated Newspapers said that Thomas Markle felt the contents of the letter had been "falsely portrayed" during the interview with People magazine, so shared the correspondence and his own account.

During the documentary, Meghan said she did not realise that the People article had contained any reference to the letter, which she said was private.

Jenny Afia, a partner at the London law firm Schillings, which represented the duchess in her successful legal action against The Mail on Sunday, said it was false that Meghan had authorised the interview.

Yes, the timing was connected — as I said all along

Valentine Low
Comment



When The Times published my story last year that one of the Duchess of Sussex's most senior aides had accused her of bullying members of staff, Team Meghan came out fighting. Her spokesman described the story as a "calculated smear".

It is a theme they have returned to again in the Netflix documentary. James Holt, the affable chief executive of their Archewell Foundation, who used to be a Palace press officer, says in the Netflix documentary: "The timing of the bullying story has even been admitted by the journalist that wrote it that it was done explicitly because of the Oprah interview."

He says this with a rather satisfied smile, as if to suggest: I've got you there. The implication is obvious: the Times story was obviously part of some sinister anti-Meghan conspiracy designed to put the skids under her forthcoming interview with Oprah Winfrey, which at that stage was just four days away.

The only trouble with that is that I was always explicit that the timing of the story was definitely connected with the Oprah interview. I did not have to "admit" anything, as James would have it: I was completely upfront about it.

Only it wasn't my desire to get the story out before Oprah, or even the wishes of a sinister cabal of Palace plotters: it was the victims of the alleged bullying who wanted to have their story heard.

The first two sentences of my front-page story spelt this out: "Royal aides have hit back at the Duchess of Sussex before her television interview with Oprah Winfrey by revealing that she faced a bullying complaint made by one of her closest advisers during her time at Kensington Palace.

"The sources approached The Times because they felt that only a partial version had emerged of Meghan's two years as a working member of the royal family and they wished to tell their side, concerned about how such matters are handled by the Palace."

I drummed home this message in a series of broadcast interviews, including one with Good Morning America, in which I said that the alleged bullying victims felt their story had never been told. And if they did not tell their story then, once Meghan had had her say on Oprah no one would care. "They are keen to correct the narrative. They think that Meghan has been having it all her own way. She has portrayed herself as a victim of the royal family … But there are two sides to this."

In the documentary Meghan does not deny the bullying claim or say that it was unfair. She is silent. She just lets Holt and Prince Harry speak for her. And, in reality, they have nothing to say either.



James Holt, the Archewell Foundation's chief executive

News Royal family

Our security was pulled, we had

David Brown





The Duke of Sussex claims he was given just three weeks' notice that his taxpayer-funded security was being removed after moving to Canada.

Harry, Meghan and their baby son Archie were living on Vancouver Island following the Queen's announcement that they would stop being working members of the royal family at the end of March 2020.

The duke tells the Netflix series he assured his wife that their security would "never" be removed.

"Meghan's background, her heritage, the well-documented hate campaigns against us … I said, 'No they would never do that.' And they did it," he says.

In a video apparently taken on a mobile telephone at the time, Harry records himself saying: "They've decided our security will be removed on 31st of March, thereby leaving me less than three weeks to find security for my family. And I'm worried. I am genuinely concerned for the safety of my family."

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police confirmed at the time that it had been providing assistance to British officers at the request of Scotland Yard but that support would end when their status changed.

The duke and duchess claim they were being harassed by the media at the luxury home they had borrowed from an unidentified benefactor with "boats in the water, cars up the drive, individuals trying to jump over the fence and take photographs over the wall".

Harry says: "This was like a week before Covid, and we'd been stuck at this house where everyone in the world knew where we were, unprotected, no security."

On March 14 the couple took a private jet to California, fearing the Canadian border would close because of the pandemic. The royal family was unaware of the move for at least six weeks.

"There comes a point when you're worried about what, what could happen next and therefore, you've got to do what I guess any husband and father would do, which is get the hell out of there," Harry says.

Meghan tells the show: "Our location was exposed. We knew our security was being pulled. Everyone in the world knew where we were."

She says negative media coverage has led to some social media users saying they wanted to kill her.

"I mean, just a couple of days ago, I was going through the manual for our security team at home," the duchess says. "And one of the pages that I happened to flip to, it was about online monitoring, and they were like, 'if you see a tweet like this, please report it to head of security immediately' and [the tweet] just said, 'Meghan just needs to die, someone needs to kill her, maybe it should be me'.

"I was just like, 'OK, that's like what's actually out in the world?'

"Because of people creating hate — and I'm a mom, it's my real life you know — and that's the piece when you see it and you go, 'you're making people want to kill me'.

"It's not just a tabloid. It's not just some story. You are making me scared, right? And like that night, to be up and down in the middle of the night, looking down the hallway, like 'are we safe, are our doors locked? Is security on?' — that's real. Are my babies safe?"

After arriving in California, the duke and duchess lived in a house provided by the Hollywood film-maker Tyler Perry, who suggested that the royal family used the techniques of a domestic abuser to try to control the couple, saying: "Like, 'We're gonna cut off the money. We're gonna not leave you security. We're gonna do all those things to make you comply and come back.'"

Harry has started legal action against the Home Office in connection with the security arrangements for himself and his family when they are in the UK.

Mr Justice Swift gave approval in July for the duke's challenge against a February 2020 decision by the executive committee for the protection of royalty and public figures, which falls under the remit of the Home Office.

Harry said he was told they would no longer receive the "same degree" of personal protective security when visiting from the US, despite offering to pay for it himself.

His lawyers said the duke was initially unaware that members of the royal household, including the late Queen's (and now the King's) private secretary, Sir Edward Young, with whom he had "significant tensions", played a role in the decision to remove his security.

'Small' home gave Oprah big shock

Harry and Meghan said that nobody "could believe" the modesty of their life at Nottingham Cottage, where they stayed immediately after their wedding (Mario Ledwith writes).

In a potential reference to criticism of the taxpayer-funded refurbishment of their later home, Frogmore Cottage, the couple say that their first taste of married life was a modest one.

They say that Oprah Winfrey was surprised when she visited Nottingham Cottage, in the grounds of Kensington Palace, for tea. Harry said: "When she came in, she sat down, she goes, 'No one would ever believe it'."

Over video of a delighted Meghan dancing at the property and of them gardening, Harry adds: "As far as people were concerned we were living in a palace and we were — a cottage on palace grounds."

The cottage "sounds regal", according to Meghan, but was in fact small.

Harry adds jokingly that the whole property sat "on a slight lean" with very low ceilings. "I don't know who it was for," he adds. "They must have been short."

Meghan said: "It was just a chapter where I don't think anybody could believe what it's like behind the scenes."

The couple also touched on their lives at Frogmore Cottage, which landed them in controversy because of the estimated £2.4 million refurbishment.

Harry recalls saying, "Yes, please" after receiving a call from the Queen about whether they were interested in living there. Meghan said they "had so many memories" there, such as going for walks in the early days of their courtship.

The cost of refurbishment, funded by taxpayers through the sovereign grant, was met with a barrage of criticism that the couple felt was unfair.

After announcing their plans to step down as working royals, the couple announced that they would pay back the cost of the grant, and have now done so.

The documentary features photos of the family and their life at Frogmore, as well as an introduction to Lorren Khumalo, the nanny who took care of their son Archie as a newborn.

Khumalo describes driving so fast that she got a speeding ticket as she went to meet the couple for the first time. She said: "When I arrived at Frogmore Cottage, I see this guy, he's tall, he's ginger and he's walking barefoot and I have gone and bought a new pair of shoes in Clarks."

Fact check Sussexes' recollections examined

Further claims made by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex in their Netflix series have been called into question after the final three episodes were released yesterday (Charlotte Wace writes).

Among them, Harry suggested the media were responsible for the failure of plans for him and Meghan to move to South Africa. He said they had previously discussed a move to New Zealand before the Palace "signed off" on the couple moving to South Africa. The offices of his father and grandmother both knew of the plans. Details of what had been proposed then appeared in The Sunday Times in 2019.

Harry said: "No one else knew. It was very much an internal document. Then it was leaked to The Times newspaper. Then that whole plan was then scrapped. Because it's now become a public debate. Once plans like that become public debates, nine times out of ten it's gonna fail."

A different version of events was put forward in *Courtiers*, written by Valentine Low. The book gave "money and security" as the most likely reasons for the scuppering of the plans.

"It ran into the sand," according to David Manning, Harry's former foreign affairs adviser, who was quoted in the book. "The problems were real and there was not a willingness to find the resources."

Harry also accused the communications team working for the Prince of Wales of "trading" negative stories with the press. But royal correspondents and experts call that into question. Previously, *Harry & Meghan* has come under scrutiny for using footage with no link to the Sussexes to illustrate media intrusion, or images that were misleading. Different versions of certain events have also been put forward since the trailers and opening episodes were broadcast.

It opened with the caption: "Members of the royal family declined to comment on the content within this series." But sources at Buckingham Palace say they — along with Kensington Palace and members of the royal family — were not approached for comment on the content of the episodes.

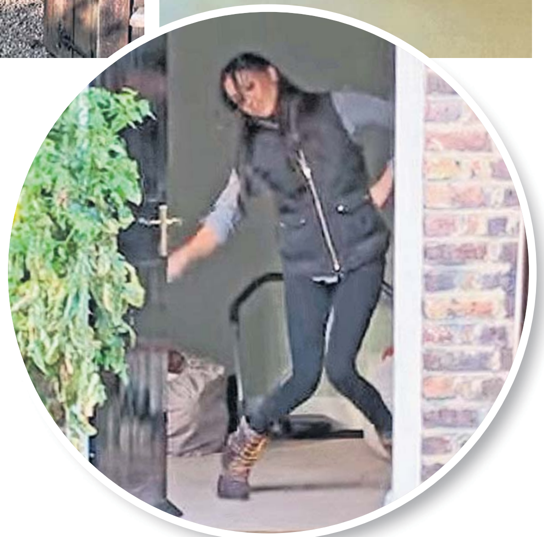
to get the hell out. It was scary





NETFLIX





The Sussexes in the garden at Nottingham Cottage, far left, where they lived immediately after their marriage in May 2018. The documentary also shows them inside the house, which Harry described as designed for "short" people. Below, Meghan wept as she outlined her treatment by the media



Self-loathing of prince over wife's suicidal thoughts

Mario Ledwith

The Duke of Sussex believes that he failed his wife during her struggles with depression and suicidal thoughts.

Harry describes a feeling of self-loathing about the period after their marriage and says he was wrong to prioritise the royal family. Meghan details how criticism in the media and lack of support from Buckingham Palace led to a crisis.

The couple repeat previous claims that the royal family knew about her deteriorating mental health and refused to allow her to seek help. Describing her torment, Meghan says: "It was like, all of this will stop if I'm not here. And that was the scariest thing about it. It was such clear thinking."

The former actress repeats the claim first made in her interview with Oprah Winfrey that she approached those in the royal family to seek professional help but was told she "wasn't allowed to".

"They were concerned about how that would look for the institution," Meghan says.

Harry recalls being "devastated" when his wife told him that her mental health was deteriorating. He says: "I knew that she was struggling. We were both struggling, but I never thought that it would get to that stage. And the fact that it got to that stage, I felt angry and ashamed."

He describes responding to her "as institutional Harry, as opposed to husband Harry", adding: "Looking back on it now, I hate myself for it. What she needed from me was so much more than I was able to give."

Harry expands on his family's apparent disregard for his wife's wellbeing, adding that they "knew how bad it was". While not naming anyone, he says that those in the family asked, "Why can't she deal with it?", in reference to the public scrutiny that comes with life as a royal. Harry explicitly attributed his wife's depression to negative reporting about her in the media and said the situation emboldened his desire to challenge the press.

Recounting a conversation, he says: "My dad said to me: 'Darling boy, you can't take on the media. The media will always be the media.' I said: 'I disagree.'"

Meghan's mother, Doria Ragland, recalls her daughter telling her about the suicidal thoughts. She says: "That really broke my heart. Because I knew, I knew that it was bad. But just to constantly be picked at by these vultures, just picking away at her spirit …

"That you would actually think of not wanting to be here, that's not an easy one for a mum to hear."

Kehinde Andrews, an author and the UK's first black studies professor, who is interviewed in the documentary, says that much of the reporting about Meghan followed an "angry black woman trope".

A segment of the documentary details how the couple were subjected to co-ordinated trolling on social media, with many messages about Meghan containing racist abuse.

The couple describes how social media attacks on them has had a devastating consequence on their lives. Meghan describes browsing through a manual for their security team and finding examples of online messages suggesting that she should be killed. She says: "It's not just a tabloid. It's not just some story. You are making me scared."

Elsewhere in the documentary, Meghan claims she was "fed to the wolves" of the media by Palace officials.

Speaking about wanting her son, Archie, to have a big family, unlike her own, she claims she had done "everything I could" to be part of the royal family, until "the bubble burst".

Harry tells the programme: "It was already clear to the media that the Palace wasn't going to protect her."

The duchess adds: "I realised that I wasn't just being thrown to the wolves, I was being fed to the wolves."

Kensington Palace confirmed it did receive an email purporting to be from a third-party production company and attempted to verify its authenticity with the Sussexes' company Archewell Productions and Netflix. But a source claimed they never received any response.

After the Sussexes' interview with Oprah Winfrey, Buckingham Palace said in a statement that "recollections may vary". But the Palace has refused to be drawn into the claims made against members of the royal family in the new docu-series and viewers have only one side of the story.

The couple also appeared to complain about Nottingham Cottage, their home in the grounds of Kensington Palace before they moved to Frogmore Cottage. "As far as people were concerned, we were living in a palace. [But] we were living in a cottage," Harry said.

Meghan added that while "Kensington Palace sounds very regal", the home was "small".

Oprah Winfrey also appeared to express surprise at the couple's living conditions, according to Harry. "No one would ever believe it," she is said to have told them.

Harry and Meghan ultimately moved out of the two-bedroom home before the birth of their son, Archie. While the comments may have been meant to invite sympathy, the Prince and Princess of Wales are former residents, having lived there when their oldest child, George, was a baby.

Angry aide rejects duchess's claim

David Brown, Valentine Low

A former senior aide to Prince William has accused the Duke and Duchess of Sussex of making false claims about his own role in Meghan's privacy case.

Jason Knauf was criticised by Harry and Meghan for giving a witness statement in the case against The Mail on Sunday for publishing details of her letter to her father, but he says he was asked by Meghan to help with her case.

Knauf was a communications secretary to both princes but at the time worked as a senior adviser to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

In a statement to the Court of Appeal, he said Meghan asked him to review the letter to her father, Thomas, with "the understanding that it could be leaked". Jenny Afia, the duchess's lawyer, says in the Netflix series that the witness statement "wasn't required, and sadly there is no way he could have done that without the authority of his bosses".

Meghan won the case and in January was awarded compensation of £1.

Knauf's representative said in a statement in the final episode of Netflix series: "These claims are entirely false. Mr Knauf was asked to provide evidence by both the Duchess of Sussex and Associated Newspapers. He was advised by counsel that evidence in his possession could be relevant and he then provided this directly to the court, staying neutral in the process."

The duchess's lawyers responded in a statement shown on screen that read: "The legal team for Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, disputes this claim. Mr Knauf was not asked to provide a witness statement by the duchess or her team. Nor do her attorneys believe Mr Knauf remained 'neutral' by submitting a witness statement relied on by Associated Newspapers while working for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge."

Knauf's representative said yesterday: "The Duchess of Sussex and Jenny Afia contacted Mr Knauf in writing asking him to assist in the preparation of their legal case."

A source close to Knauf said: "He has been neutral throughout this. He never discussed his witness statement with anybody in the royal household and never sought their consent for it. He had independent legal advice, and counsel advised him that he held evidence that would assist the court."

The source added that his statement did not just help the newspaper. "His evidence was useful to both sides at different points in the proceedings. It proved useful to the duchess, particularly on the copyright side of things."

Firm unites to sing from the same carol sheet



Members of the royal family attend the Together at Christmas carol service at Westminster Abbey. The Princess of Wales

David Brown

The royal family put on a public display of unity yesterday evening when they attended Christmas carols together hours after Prince Harry's incendiary allegations of lying and betrayal.

The King, Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales attended Westminster Abbey for a service "dedicated to the late Queen and the values she demonstrated throughout her life". They were pictured in the front row singing from the same hymn sheets.





The royals were greeted by a cheering crowd despite Harry claiming in the Netflix series that the Queen stayed silent while William screamed at him, and that his father said "things that simply weren't true" during a crisis meeting about his future in 2020. Well-wishers shouted, "Kate, we love you" and "Prince William, we love you" as the princess greeted her family outside before the service.

Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace have declined to comment on the show but senior members of the family decided to continue their public engagements while the Duke and Duchess of Sussex remain in a self-imposed exile in California.

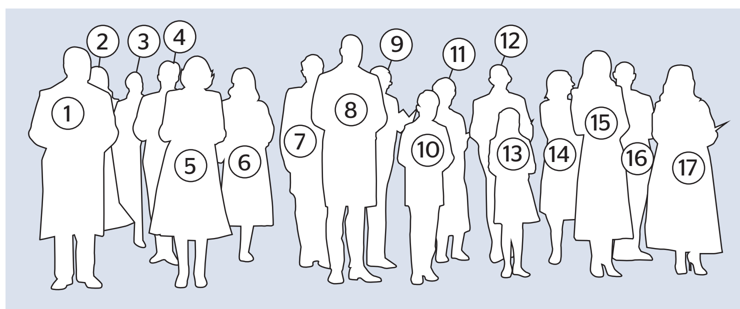
Prince George, nine, and Princess Charlotte, seven, attended the Westminster service along with the Countess of Wessex, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, the Duke of Kent and Princess Alexandra. Other members of the family present included Princess Beatrice, Princess Eugenie — who is seen as close to Harry — Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, Lady Gabriella Kingston, and Zara and Mike Tindall. Lord and Lady Frederick Windsor, Thomas Kingston, and Daniel Chatto and Lady Sarah Chatto were also among the guests. Kate's parents Carole and Michael Middleton attended with her sister Pippa and brother James.

More than 1,800 people gathered in the abbey for the service, which was held to recognise the "selfless efforts of individuals, families and communities across the UK, and celebrate and showcase the joy that human connection and togetherness can bring".

Kensington Palace said the concert was dedicated to the late Queen and the values she demonstrated: "duty, empathy, faith, service, kindness, compassion and support for others." The Palace said the principles were "shared and personified by the inspirational guests who have been invited to the abbey in recognition of their tireless work to help and care for those around them".

The Princess of Wales was greeted by clergy at the door of the abbey before going inside, where she chatted with guests and high-fived children. She met and thanked those taking part in the service, including the actor Hugh Bonneville, who stars in the Paddington films, and the singer Melanie C.

A Christmas tree in the abbey is decorated with small Paddington Bears, in recognition of the late Queen's sketch with the bear during her Platinum Jubilee celebrations this year.



1 The King **2** Princess Beatrice **3** Lord Frederick Windsor **4** Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi (husband of Beatrice) **5** The Queen **6** Princess Eugenie **7** Jack Brooksbank (husband of Eugenie) **8** Prince of Wales **9** Duke of Gloucester **10** Prince George **11** Duchess of Gloucester **12** Duke of Kent **13** Princess Charlotte **14** Zara Tindall **15** Princess of Wales **16** Mike Tindall **17** Countess of Wessex



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YUI MOK/PA



chatted with children in the abbey, which had a Christmas tree decorated with Paddington Bears in memory of the Queen

Do yourself a favour, don't watch it all

Review Carol Midgley

Harry & Meghan (episodes 4-6)
Netflix
★★★☆☆

If you have yet to embark on the six-hour marathon *Harry & Meghan*, here's my advice, having wearily stayed the course. Ditch the first four hours and just watch the last two.

Because while there are not massive "bombshells" in episodes five and six, there are well-aimed grenades. Harry believes Meghan's miscarriage was caused by the stress of her legal battle with Associated Newspapers over the copyright of her letter to her estranged father. "I believe that my wife suffered a miscarriage because of what the Mail did," he said.

At a family meeting at Sandringham to discuss Harry and Meghan withdrawing from the UK, it all kicked off like a row in Wetherspoons. "It was terrifying to have my brother scream and shout at me and my father say things that simply weren't true and my grandmother quietly sit there and take it all in," he said. William was also jealous that Harry and Meghan were "stealing the limelight", apparently. So William is an ego-driven bully and Charles is a liar? Woah. At least, having allegedly spent $100 million on this vanity project, Netflix is seeing a little value for money, unedifying as it is.

Because when Harry and Meghan aren't preening and whingeing and documenting their private pain in staged, arty black and white stills photography they give a persuasive account of how they felt attacked and bullied by sections of the media and certain palace aides. There was indeed a period of time when for the Mail Meghan couldn't seem to do anything right, whether it was touching her baby bump too often or wearing an off-the-shoulder dress, and Kate couldn't do anything wrong. It was sobering to see Meghan's mother become distressed after Meghan said she felt so overwhelmed by the constant attacks that she wanted to take her own life, which is horrendous.

Yet there is still a contradiction at the heart of it all. Here they are explaining, for instance, why they wouldn't serve up their child on a platter for a royal photo op, while serving up their children in intimate home videos. For a couple who profess to loathe being followed by cameras they barely seem to make a sandwich without the documentary team filming it. We watch a film of them watching the film of their interview with Oprah Winfrey, in real time. Then Meghan says, modestly: "Beyoncé just texted." Name-dropping, moi? At another point we see Harry frowning at his phone. It's a text from William. He doesn't read it out, and I may be wrong but I got the impression that it was about the Duke of Edinburgh's death. All laid out for public consumption.

They make a good point that the royal family lost a huge opportunity to show how it has evolved by having a mixed-heritage person at the heart of it. But this documentary is so one-sided (the "truth" is Meghan and Harry-shaped), it's hard to know definitively why it couldn't work. When celebrities make documentaries about themselves there is usually a nod to objectivity, an attempt to address hard questions or allegations, an acknowledgement that they may have, on occasion, been wrong, because, hey, no one's perfect. Meghan, for instance, did not directly address the bullying allegations made against her by some members of the royal staff. It was merely posited that it was leaked to discredit her over the Oprah interview. Why not say, "I didn't phone people at all hours of the night. I didn't make impossible demands"? The message always seems to be that Meghan is perfect; Harry is perfect. They are always right. Maybe it's all the therapy, but at times they seem drunk on their own righteousness.

Will this second "volume" help their cause? Certainly more than "Volume I", which was exceptionally tedious. Meghan told of how in her wedding speech, which she keeps on her phone, she called their romance "a modern fairytale… the love story of a boy and a girl who are meant to be together". If you're thinking that at least it's all over now and there won't be "Volumes III and IV", I fear you are very much mistaken.

The healers prise open the wound

Hilary Rose
Comment

It is with hearts full of joy that we reach the last three episodes of the H&M show. The couple recently told us that they were advocates for healing, so this week they prised open the festering wound that is their relationship with the royals, rubbed it liberally with salt and ran cackling back to Montecito to count the cash.

Let's take it from the top, for the 4,000th and hopefully last time. We learn that Meghan's private secretary told her it would be hard for the family to adjust to her general fabulousness and legendary charm, and I paraphrase slightly, and perhaps it will turn out to be true, or the private secretary's truth, or both, or neither.

The sun rises over Windsor, because Meghan is there and she is marrying Harry and the first of many town criers makes an appearance because nothing sums up 21st-century England like a town crier. Harry says that he had to have a big public wedding like his brother, when all his bride really wanted was to run away to Gretna Green and say "I do" over an anvil. Meghan credits him with choosing the music for her to walk up the aisle, but try as I might I don't remember the Beastie Boys featuring that day. Silly me: it was Handel's *Eternal Source of Light Divine*, an old favourite of Harry's from his swastika days.

Someone called Lucy says the Palace was threatened by Meghan's popularity, and that'll tell 'em, Luce, and the subtitles say that melancholic music is playing. Silver Tree makes a welcome return to look serious and confirm that love won. Someone says that the royal family needed a boost of energy, and indeed the late Queen was a notorious sloth, and some bloke from Archewell tells us that it needed "a modernisation that would speak to a new generation of people" and Paddington Bear doffed his cap and said "if only…"

H&M complain that they had to live in an idyllic little cottage with roses around the door, and later we cut to Grenfell Tower in flames, an unspeakable tragedy shoehorned in so that we can admire how caring they are as they meet survivors. We learn that Meghan is bringing "honesty and humanity to those spaces", and then there's more Diana, and H&M, and cheering crowds and booing Twitter trolls and Meghan weeping prettily and without shedding a tear or ruining her make-up about the injustice of it all. Do you have any idea how low the ceilings were at that cottage? Or how disbelieving poor Oprah was when she came to tea, and witnessed their squalid living conditions? Tense music plays, a headline from the National Enquirer clinches an argument they had with someone, and over to the bloke from Archewell, who's talking about power dynamics in a constitutional monarchy.

Meghan confirms that there is no connection between Harry having lots of friends before he met her and none after, apart from someone called Nicky. I lost consciousness when Harry started talking about avocados, and when I came round it had something to do with Kate wearing a one-shouldered ball gown. Harry accuses his brother of dark behaviour, and Meghan complains that she wasn't even allowed to text a photo to her friends, which is up there with telling Oprah she had her passport taken away on arrival and only managed 400 foreign holidays in ten minutes. Does that sound true? It does? That's good enough for them.

An actress from *Suits* says something and Meghan, never one to nurse a grudge, digs deep to feel bitter once again about the coverage of her $500,000 baby shower in New York, to which she flew on a private jet and oh look, another town crier. Poignant music plays and the précis of episode five reads: "After private correspondences [sic] with their families are leaked, the couple makes a crucial decision — and ensuing online campaigns turn chilling." They claim to love the peace and quiet they found in Canada after Megxit, which chimes with everything they've said and done since, and Harry asks Meghan if she's filming him as he jumps into the sea and duh, Harry, yes, she's filming, otherwise what's the point? And on and on through trolls, and privacy lawyers, and Grio, which might be a publication, or a Twitter handle, or a town crier, saying royal pundits amplify hate.

A headline from the Mercury News is shown as proof of something, Janet Street-Porter says something on *Loose Women* and a columnist on The Yorkshire Post writes something they don't like. H&M complain furiously that nobody wanted Meghan at the Sandringham Summit, and for once, I share her pain and fury. How was she supposed to record a private meeting for public consumption and personal gain if they wouldn't even let her through the door? A lawyer adds: "Not that she would have done that." Either way, the last few years have been so stressful that only a guided meditation instructor could help. "Your work is not to prove your goodness," she tells them, and having watched six hours of their work, I can confirm that it has not. Meghan talks about the sacrifices she made for this country and wistful music plays. Sentence of the series goes to Harry, who credits "another amazing friend who we've never met", and in London, the Sussex Survivors' Club wonder if never meeting H&M was perhaps the only way to be their friend.

I'm tempted to call these moaning morons from Montecito the Moomins for short, but that would be defamatory to Moomins, who would be far too sensible to moan about the difficulties of finding a mansion to call your own just as Covid hit.

We will close with a quiz. Who said the following? The prize is knowing that you have been enriched by the wisdom of Moomins.

"We are going to rebuild and rebuild and rebuild until it is rebuilt."

"Keep your big girl panties on."

"When we find each other and connect, we're, like, it's you, it's you."

"When you've lost a huge piece of yourself, getting that back includes getting back those friendships and things that anchor you to who you are."

"Raise a glass to the astounding assurance that now life begins and the everlasting knowing that above all, love wins."

"All small beasts should have bows in their tails/ Or they'll find themselves locked in Hemulen jails/ If you make a mistake, get ready to pay/ You can't blame another and then run away."

MPs face scrutiny over trips abroad

George Greenwood
Investigations Reporter

A small group of MPs is responsible for making overseas trips worth £450,000, often paid for by private companies or governments with questionable human rights records.

Many of the journeys were taken by members of all-party parliamentary groups (APPGs) linked to foreign countries. The unofficial cross-party bodies of MPs and peers campaign on specific topics, but concerns have been raised about the transparency of their activities. The 11 MPs involved had signed up as members of 20 or more such groups, according to the news website Politico.

The biggest beneficiary was the Tory MP Mark Pritchard, who accepted £84,680 worth of trips since entering parliament in 2005, the analysis found. He made six foreign trips in 2015 and seven in 2016, and has visited Qatar three times in the past three years.

The most expensive trip was by Angus Brendan MacNeil of the Scottish National Party: worth £10,359, it was to Hong Kong. The Labour MP John Spellar has taken three trips of six days or more since 2013, including a week-long visit to Singapore. Ian Paisley Jr, of the Democratic Unionist Party, has taken three trips to Sri Lanka and three to the Maldives since 2012.

Trips by the Conservative MP Daniel Kawczynski since his election in 2005 included visits to Morocco, Albania and Mauritania paid for by mining and chemical manufacturing companies.

The SNP MP Lisa Cameron took 13 trips in seven years, including two to New York in three weeks.

The MPs told Politico the trips were a valuable part of their work that could enhance understanding of foreign issues and help to forge closer ties.

Some MPs did not mention the countries in parliament. All the trips were publicly declared in accordance with rules about gifts and hospitality. A report by the Commons standards committee in April said "a dramatic increase in the number of APPGs … has created the conditions for inappropriate influence and access [that could] represent the next great parliamentary scandal."

Frequent flyers

MPs who took free trips worth five figures include:

Mark Pritchard (Con) £84,680
Mark Menzies (Con) £70,800
Andrew Rosindell (Con) £45,247
Daniel Kawczynski (Con) £43,770
Angus MacNeil (SNP) £38,585
Ian Paisley Jr (DUP) £35,022
Bob Stewart (Con) £31,137
Lisa Cameron (SNP) £31,121
John Spellar (Lab) £27,622
Sheryll Murray (Con) £26,560
Martin Vickers (Con) £19,071

ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA



Wintry wonder A Snow Queen show opens today under the stars in the ruins of Beaulieu Abbey, Hampshire, with atmospheric lighting and a West End cast

Quintagram® No 1500

Solve all five clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Local theatre (2-4)
_ _ _ _ _ _

2 Long punctuation mark (2,4)
_ _ _ _ _ _

3 London area with a noted lock (6)
_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Expanding bullet (6)
_ _ _ _ _ _

5 Basketball feat (4,4)
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	A	C	D	D
D	D	D	D	E	E	H	K
L	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
N	N	R	S	S	U	U	U

Solutions MindGames in Times2
Cryptic clues every day online

Dementia weight link

Gaining weight in middle age and losing it in later life is a sign that dementia is potentially imminent, scientists from China and America say. Rhoda Au, professor of anatomy and neurobiology at Boston University, said people who lost weight suddenly should find out why. "There are some potential treatments emerging where early detection might be critical," she said. The study was published in Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association.

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Families remember boys lost in lake

Ali Mitib, Mario Ledwith

The family of three children who died after being pulled from an icy lake have paid tribute to their "beautiful boys".

Finlay Butler, eight, his brother, Sam, six, and their cousin, Thomas Stewart, 11, were playing on Babbs Mill Lake, in Kingshurst, near Solihull, on Sunday afternoon when they fell in.

Jack Johnson, 10, lost his life after entering the water to try to help them.

Finlay, Thomas and Jack all died on Sunday. Sam died on Wednesday in intensive care. All four are reported to have suffered cardiac arrest.

Yesterday Thomas's older brother said in a statement issued by police: "Thomas was such a lively little soul, he had a big heart for such a young kid and he was beautiful. I love you Tom. Big Bro will take care of the family."

A friend of the Johnson family told MailOnline: "The boys had gone to the park with their cousin Thomas to feed the ducks. They went out on the ice and then one fell through the ice and the others went to help and fell in."

The parents of Finlay and Samuel and the parents of Thomas said: "We are devastated at the loss of our beautiful boys in such tragic circumstances. We would like to thank the emergency services for all they did and the community for their support."

Last night a relative of Jack, who asked not to be named, urged parents to warn their children about the dangers of playing on ice. They told Sky News: "The kids were playing on the ice, they shouldn't have been, but kids will be kids. They did not see the harm and danger, it was just fun for them. We would hate for another family to go through this. Please talk to your kids and explain to them not to take risks on open water."

They said Jack's father, Kirk, had "jumped straight in alongside an older gentleman who had been walking his dog", and tried to save him.

Residents called for a fence around the lake's perimeter, together with more signs and CCTV, to try to prevent such tragedies. The local council is to be urged to act.

A carpet of flowers, balloons, soft toys and messages near the lake has grown in the days since the tragedy. A vigil was held at the site on Monday evening and the family of one of the victims visited the scene to look at tributes.

They were joined yesterday by the international footballer Tyrone Mings and his fellow Aston Villa player and club captain, John McGinn.

Mings said: "It was a personal decision to pay our respects. I think it's impacted the whole city. We felt it was important to come down just to show that support. Sometimes, as we've seen with other things that have happened across the city, there are things more important than football. We felt it was important to come down here and show we were thinking about everything that has happened and the parents that are affected by it. We feel that pain too."

Superintendent Richard Harris of West Midlands police said: "This is a tragedy beyond words and a grief that is unimaginable for the families and friends of the boys. The support of the community has been overwhelming, not just for the bereaved families, but also for the emergency services, for which we are extremely grateful.

"We would like to pass on our condolences to Jack's family at this very sad time and ask for privacy from the media to begin to grieve."

One police officer, a student response officer on one of his first operational rotations, suffered mild hypothermia trying to punch through the ice to reach the children.

The schools attended by the boys also paid tribute to them. Cieran Flaherty, the head teacher of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, said: "Jack was a loving, bubbly pupil with a heart of gold.

"He was a joy to teach and a child who we are all so very proud of, a ray of sunshine who would never fail to make us all smile. We can only say thank you to him for brightening up our lives."

Dr Toby Close, Park Hall Academy's associate head, said: "Tom was a well-liked, caring pupil who went out of his way to look after those around him. He was a loyal friend to so many in our school community.

"In the short time he was at Park Hall, his outgoing personality, energy and wit shone through."



FAMILY HANDOUT; RICHARD VERNALLS/PA

Finlay and Sam Butler, left, had gone with their cousin Thomas Stewart, right, to feed ducks at Babbs Mill Lake near Solihull on Sunday when they fell through the ice. Another boy, Jack Johnson, who tried to save them, also died. Tributes have been left at the scene where police were still on duty yesterday. Both the families and senior officers said they had been overwhelmed by the support of the community





Iman: Bowie fans' grief made me a target

Laurence Sleator

David Bowie's wife Iman has revealed that the public outpouring of grief after his death left her feeling as if she had a "target on her head".

The Somali-born supermodel, who married Bowie in 1992, said she and the couple's teenage daughter were forced to leave their New York home because bereaved fans were camped outside.

Bowie died aged 69 in January 2016, two days after the release of his 26th studio album, *Blackstar*. He had had liver cancer for 18 months.

Iman, 67, who is British Vogue's January cover star, told the magazine that the attention on her and the couple's daughter, Alexandria Zahra Jones, soon became "too much".

"We lived a very private life and suddenly it felt like there was a target on mine and my daughter's head. It got to the point where we had to leave our home because the public were always at the front door.

"You had people who would take your picture, sell it and then come to you and say, 'I feel your pain'. And I'm like, 'No, b***h, you don't feel my pain, get away from me'."



Iman and her daughter left their New York home

However, she said she later processed her grief in private at her new home.

The model, who met Bowie in 1990 on a surprise blind date, told Vogue she dislikes people referring to him as her "late husband". "He is not my 'late husband'. He is my husband," she said.

"I don't mind at all being referred to as 'David Bowie's wife'," she added. "But I always remind people that I existed before I met him. And he was also very particular. He never introduced me by saying, 'Meet my wife'. He'd always say, 'Meet Iman, my wife'. So we both already had our own identity."

Iman also told the magazine that she was concerned about the rise of plastic surgery and the pressure to look young.

"I come from Africa, we celebrate getting older. A friend was telling me there's been a rise in cosmetic surgery, all because [people] have been looking at themselves in Zoom meetings," she said. "I'm like, 'If you are worried about that, just put the camera up [so it's tilted down on your face], for God's sake!'"

Man held after deaths of mother and two children

George Sandeman

A triple murder investigation has begun after the deaths of a mother and her two young children.

Police arrested a man, 52, after they were called to a housing development in Kettering where the victims were found with serious injuries.

Northamptonshire police said they went to the home in Petherton Court after receiving reports at 11.15am yesterday. Two air ambulances were also called.

The woman died at the scene despite treatment from paramedics. Her two children, a boy aged six and a girl aged four, died later in hospital.

Officers said the family were living in a ground-floor flat and that the man was arrested on suspicion of murder at about 1.30pm. He remains in custody.

The force said it was not looking for anyone else in relation and that officers would be on patrol in the area to reassure residents.

Forensic teams spent yesterday searching the flat. Post-mortem examinations will take place in the coming days. A Vauxhall Zafira parked outside the flat was taken away by investigators.

Superintendent Steve Freeman said: "It is a desperately sad incident and I want to be absolutely clear on our unwavering commitment in establishing what has happened here and in seeking justice for this woman and these young children."

News Winter of discontent

Patients feel the pain as strike

Eleanor Hayward
Health Correspondent
Kat Lay Health Editor

Patients face waiting weeks in pain for surgery to be rescheduled after thousands of hospital appointments were cancelled because of the nurses' strike.

Ministers estimate about 70,000 appointments, procedures and surgeries were postponed at the 44 hospital trusts in England where nurses walked out yesterday.

Several NHS minor injury and illness units, treating patients with sprains, strains, cuts and burns, were forced to shut their doors.

Hospitals said they would try to reschedule appointments by the end of next month. The strike has compounded the misery of 7.1 million patients on record NHS waiting lists.

Cancer patients, who charities said already faced "unacceptably" long waits, were among those with appointments called off. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) had refused a plea from NHS chiefs to exempt all cancer care from the strike.

Pat Cullen, head of the RCN, said urgent cancer surgery was not affected, adding she was sorry for patients but that it was the government that needed to apologise.

She said: "It's tragic for nursing, it's tragic for patients and it's tragic for the NHS, that the government feels that they can sit in their offices today and keep our nurses out in the cold."

NHS leaders said hospitals had minimised harm by "prioritising urgent and life-saving care", adding that the vast majority of patients were told in advance if their care was being postponed.

Professor Tim Orchard, chief executive of Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust in London, said that some procedures had been postponed for as long as six weeks although "time-critical cancer care" continued.

He said: "We expect that patients who have had their appointment or surgery postponed will be able to be rescheduled for the end of January."

Thousands of nurses braved the bitter cold to stand on picket lines, with many indicating they could keep striking for months.

Maggie Hamilton, 68, who joined dozens of nursing colleagues outside the Royal Marsden cancer hospital in London, said: "This feels like it is only the beginning. Nurses are not going to back down. There has been amazing support today from everyone driving past — the taxis, bus drivers, public, fire engines. Everyone at some stage in their life is going to need a nurse at their bedside."

Three miles away at St Thomas' Hospital opposite parliament, red London buses and ambulances sounded their horns in support of the crowd of more than 100 striking nurses.

Issy, 24, who works on the hospital's stroke ward, said: "I'm prepared to keep striking for months until there is a pay deal. I try my hardest to be the best nurse I can but there just aren't enough of us. Patients are suffering."

The disruption will intensify next week, when nurses walk out for a second day on Tuesday.

Ambulance workers will stage their first nationwide strike, walking out for 24 hours on Wednesday, with the result that some 999 calls will go unanswered. Doctors have said that patients are already dying as a result of record waiting times in A&E.

Most ambulance services are yet to reach formal agreement with striking unions on what cover will be provided. The GMB union and South East Coast Ambulance Service agreed on Wednesday that between 50 per cent and 75 per cent of key operations and 111 staff would remain in work.

There is no agreement that all category two calls will receive a response. This is the second most urgent type of callout, including for heart attacks and strokes. A paramedic is supposed to arrive within 18 minutes.

Under the trust and union's deal, GMB members on picket lines could be asked to start work if nobody else can attend paediatric and maternity emergency calls, major incidents, road accidents where people are trapped, and elderly people who have fallen outside or have been on the floor for more than four hours.

The British Medical Association urged GPs to reject a request from NHS leaders to cover for striking ambulance workers. Dr Kieran Sharrock, acting chairman of the GP committee, said surgeries were operating beyond a safe capacity, adding "we cannot spread ourselves even more thinly".

Junior doctors are being balloted on a strike next month, and could join nurses and ambulance staff on picket lines if the pay dispute continues.

What the NHS needs is more managers, Emma Duncan, page 30
Letters, page 32
Nurses risk losing public sympathy, leading article, page 33







Striking nurses made their case at St Thomas' hospital, across the Thames from parliament, and at Guy's in southeast London, top. Dame Ruth May, above, chief nursing officer for England, spoke to the pickets outside St Thomas'. In Bristol striking nurses went to the aid of a man who had collapsed near their picket line

Analysis

It is hard to see what can stop the NHS strikes that began yesterday from getting progressively worse over the winter (Chris Smyth writes). The government refuses to talk about pay, and unions refuse to stop until they do — the recipe for a protracted dispute.

The nursing union is planning the next wave of strikes in January and they are unlikely to be the last. Ambulance staff who walk out next week are already talking about potentially co-ordinating action next year. By the end of February junior doctors are likely to be on their own picket line.

The nurses' mandate for strikes runs until May and, with feelings running high, there seems no way out at least until then.

From a narrow NHS perspective there is a potential deal in what is happening in Scotland, where an increased offer of 7.5 per cent may well be accepted next week. This would cost £2 billion in England, the kind of sum often found down the back of a sofa in the Department of Health.

But Maria Caulfield, the minister for women's health, made clear yesterday why the government is so reluctant to consider this: reopening pay talks with nurses would embolden other NHS staff as well as teachers, firefighters and other public sector workers to hold out for higher pay once the government had been seen to wobble.

Paying for it all would require another tax rise and this could be the final straw for many Tory MPs who glumly swallowed last month's budget.

The hope is that after months of strikes nurses and other workers will run out of steam as public dissatisfaction and lost earnings mount. Already there are signs that support for the RMT on the railways is wavering.

But by the spring we will be into another financial year and a fresh round of pay talks. Ministers clearly hope that inflation will have fallen far enough by then to make rises of 2 to 3 per cent palatable. If it stays high, the prospect of more real-terms pay cuts could reharden the resolve to strike.

But if the government is in the mood to compromise, there is, perhaps, a face-saving solution. Pay review bodies might be asked to reconsider their recommendations in the light of inflation that has been higher than forecast when they took evidence at the start of the year, potentially feeding into next year's settlement.

This would still be costly but would let ministers argue they are continuing to follow independent assessments.

Pickets rush to help man who collapsed in the street

Eleanor Hayward

Striking nurses in Bristol left their picket line yesterday to help an elderly man who collapsed on the street.

Some dashed into Bristol Royal Infirmary for blankets while others put him in the recovery position until a stretcher was brought out.

One nurse, Julie Lewers, 61, said: "This just shows the professionalism of these people who still have patient care at their heart. None of us feel happy about going out on strike but after more than ten years of pushing for a realistic pay rise we have been left with no choice. It may sound odd but we are doing this because we care about patients — if a substantial pay rise isn't brought in more nurses will leave and less will be attracted to the profession."

Thousands joined picket lines in subzero temperatures outside the 45 NHS hospital trusts affected by the strike. Pat Cullen, head of the Royal College of Nursing, said public warmth towards striking nurses had been "immense".

Passing ambulances, taxi drivers, buses and police cars were among those sounding their horns in support of the strikes. The public brought sandwiches, cakes and chocolates to the pickets.

Kelly Hopkins, on the picket line outside Aintree University Hospital, Liverpool, said: "Nurses are having to use food banks, they're coming in cold, they're going without food to feed their children, it's just crazy.

"The wards are understaffed, which is affecting patient care. Patients aren't getting their teeth brushed, they're lying in their own waste because there aren't enough of us. We can't split ourselves in two, especially on the wards. Unless we stand up and say something it's just going to get worse."

delays treatment for 70,000

LUCY NORTH/PA; GEORGE CRACKNELL WRIGHT/LNP; ELEANOR HAYWARD FOR THE TIMES



Latest interest rate rise will not be last

Arthi Nachiappan
Economics Correspondent

The Bank of England put up its interest rate for the ninth time in a row, taking the base rate to 3.5 per cent, and its governor said there was a "long way to go" before inflation was under control.

The Bank's monetary policy committee (MPC) raised the rate by half a point in an effort to control inflation, which is weighing on households and businesses. The base rate has risen by 3.4 points, from 0.1 per cent last December. In a sign that the Bank is slowing the pace of increases as economic activity lags, the latest rise is smaller than the three-quarter point increase last month.

The economy grew by 0.5 per cent in October but economists believe that is unlikely to stop Britain sinking into recession by the end of the year. Although inflation may have peaked, the impact of the cost of living crisis on the economy is only beginning, and a prolonged downturn in gross domestic product is expected to start this winter and last throughout next year.

Inflation fell from its 41-year high of 11.1 per cent in October to 10.7 per cent last month because of a slowdown in the growth of fuel prices, Office for National Statistics figures suggest.

Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England, said: "We've seen possibly this week, the first glimmer that [inflation] is not only beginning to come down, but it was a little bit below where we thought it would be … That's obviously very good news. But there's a long way to go."

Putting interest rates up increases the cost of borrowing and the return on savings. It is used to encourage people to save rather than spend, reducing demand in the economy and, in theory, prices. Rate rises are typically passed on by banks to mortgage borrowers.

Inflation in prices and wages could be persistent, justifying a "forceful" policy response, officials said in minutes of their meeting. The half-point rise in interest rates would help to bring inflation back to the Bank's 2 per cent target and reduce the risk of a "more extended and costly" series of interest rate rises later on, they added. The Bank expects inflation to fall back to target by 2024.

Moving on up

The Bank of England has raised interest rates to 3.5 per cent, a 14-year high



Source: Bank of England

Jobs figures published this week suggested that although wage rises were close to a record high the value of earnings had fallen for a sixth month because the cost of living was so high. Public sector workers, including teachers and nurses, are among the worst hit, with wage rises of 2.7 per cent and inflation in double digits.

The Office for Budget Responsibility said that people faced two years of record falls in living standards as inflation squeezes budgets.

In his autumn statement Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, announced plans to extend the energy price guarantee, which caps the average household bill at £2,500, until April, for another year with a higher average cap of £3,000.

The plan reduces inflation next year by 0.75 percentage points, according to the Bank's forecasts.

Hunt said in a letter to Bailey yesterday that it was "essential to businesses and households across the country that inflation is brought back to target, and I know the [MPC] will continue to take the action necessary to achieve this."

The committee said that if its projections, which include a slow decline in inflation, a recession and a rise in unemployment, hold true then further interest rate rises may be required.

Investors expect interest rates to peak at about 4.5 per cent next year.

Bank chiefs were split, page 39

More on the wards have flu than Covid

Kat Lay, Max Kendix

Hospital admissions for flu are at their highest rate for four winters and have overtaken Covid-19 admissions for the first time since the pandemic began.

The rate of flu admissions was 6.8 per 100,000 people in the week to December 11, compared with 6.6 per 100,000 for Covid-19, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said.

Dr Conall Watson, of the UKHSA, said hospitalisations had risen sharply in the under-fives and over-85s.

He said: "We are expecting case numbers to continue increasing as we move further into winter. The flu vaccine offers the best protection against severe illness and it's not too late for everyone eligible to get it. Uptake is particularly low in those aged 2 and 3, so if your child is eligible, please take up the offer." Separate data from NHS England has laid bare the scale of rising winter pressures on the health service.

The average number of hospital beds filled by flu patients each day has jumped two thirds in a week, from 712 to 1,162.

Meanwhile, NHS 111 dealt with more than 700,000 calls last week, compared with 440,047 calls the week before.

Nearly half of calls to 111 were abandoned and only 15 per cent were answered within 60 seconds, fewer than any monthly average during the pandemic. NHS chiefs urged people to use the online service rather than the telephone if possible.

Professor Sir Stephen Powis, NHS medical director for England, said: "This huge increase in calls to NHS 111 is understandable, with concerns about winter viruses, including strep A, a top priority for the public, but it is more important than ever that the public uses 111 online where possible to get important information about non-emergency health conditions and to be signposted to the best possible care."

Figures show that more than 95 per cent of beds were occupied, well above the "safe" limit of 85 per cent. Across the week, 13,245 beds were occupied by people well enough to go home.

Ambulance handover delays in England also reached a record, with one in six patients waiting more than a hour to be passed to A&E teams. More than one in three had to wait at least 30 minutes.

Powis added: "With industrial action planned today and next week, NHS teams are working hard to minimise disruption, and while people may see their local services impacted, they must continue to call 999 in a life-threatening emergency during strikes, as well as attending pre-booked appointments as planned, unless they have been contacted for it be rearranged."

Office for National Statistics polling suggests that one in five adults are waiting for a hospital appointment or test or to start NHS medical treatment.

One in 14 said they had paid for private medical care because they felt the wait for free NHS treatment was too long.

Rail walkout stops medics getting to hospital on time

Charlie Parker, Tom Ball
Emma Yeomans

A grandfather with terminal cancer has said rail strikes, not the nurses' walkout, prevented patients from receiving chemotherapy on time yesterday.

Gary Hooker, 67, said the cancer centre at Guy's Hospital, London, was supposed to run normally during the NHS action but was a "ghost town" in the morning due to knock-on disruption from Wednesday's train strikes.

Hooker, who has stage 4 prostate cancer, said "a coachload" of chemo patients received treatment up to 90 minutes late because travel chaos stopped them and specialist nurses from getting to the hospital on time.

Hooker, who drove from Gravesend, Kent, said he supported the nurses but criticised rail strikes for their effect on healthcare.

In Liverpool's main hospital , patients at A&E had to wait 12 hours to be seen as nurses took to the picket lines. Those arriving at lunchtime were told they would face a wait of 11½ hours. One woman who went to the Royal Liverpool Hospital A&E after midnight was seen just before midday.

Tens of thousands of appointments were cancelled at hospitals across the country. Addenbrooke's in Cambridge, the national centre for both cancer and children's care, was forced to cancel 2,000 appointments over two days.

Roni Mounter's husband Neil has blood cancer but his appointment in Birmingham was cancelled due to strike action. Mounter, from Shrewsbury, told Radio 4's *Today* programme that cancer care should be exempt from strike action. She said: "There are certain treatments, like my husband's, which shouldn't be delayed any longer."

Rival rail union agrees to pay deal Lynch dismissed

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

Thousands of railway workers have voted to accept a pay offer from Network Rail in a move likely to undermine the RMT's ongoing strike campaign.

Members of the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) voted "overwhelmingly" to accept the company's pay offer – which Mick Lynch, general secretary of the RMT, described as "substandard" on Monday.

The TSSA, which represents about 2,500 white-collar workers at Network Rail, put the offer to its members and did not encourage them to vote one way or the other. The union said that 85 per cent had voted "yes" on a 70 per cent turnout.

The same offer was rejected by RMT members, who were strongly advised by their union to vote "no".

Andrew Haines, chief executive of Network Rail, said: "TSSA and Unite members have both voted to resoundingly accept the very same deal that the RMT continue to reject. We know there is a sizeable number of RMT members who want this deal and we can see that strike action is beginning to break down. Thousands of colleagues have refused to strike this week, instead coming into work to keep services running and Britain moving. It is time the RMT executive put their members' interests first and end this dispute."

Luke Chester, TSSA organising director, said: "This is a decisive result with our members roundly endorsing this offer. It shows what can be done through negotiations when there's a serious offer on the table. Let me be clear though: this has only come about because our members stood together taking strike action to get a fair settlement."

The offer includes a pay rise of at least 5 per cent backdated to the start of this year and 4 per cent next year — and at least 11 per cent over the two years for those on lower salaries. The company has ruled out any compulsory redundancies before January 31, 2025.

Members of Unite working at Network Rail have also voted to accept the pay offer. The union represents a small but crucial group of electrical control room operators.

In contrast Lynch said that 63.6 per cent of RMT members at Network Rail had voted to reject the offer with a turnout of 83 per cent.

Industry sources said that amounted to 9,772 out of 20,970 eligible members.

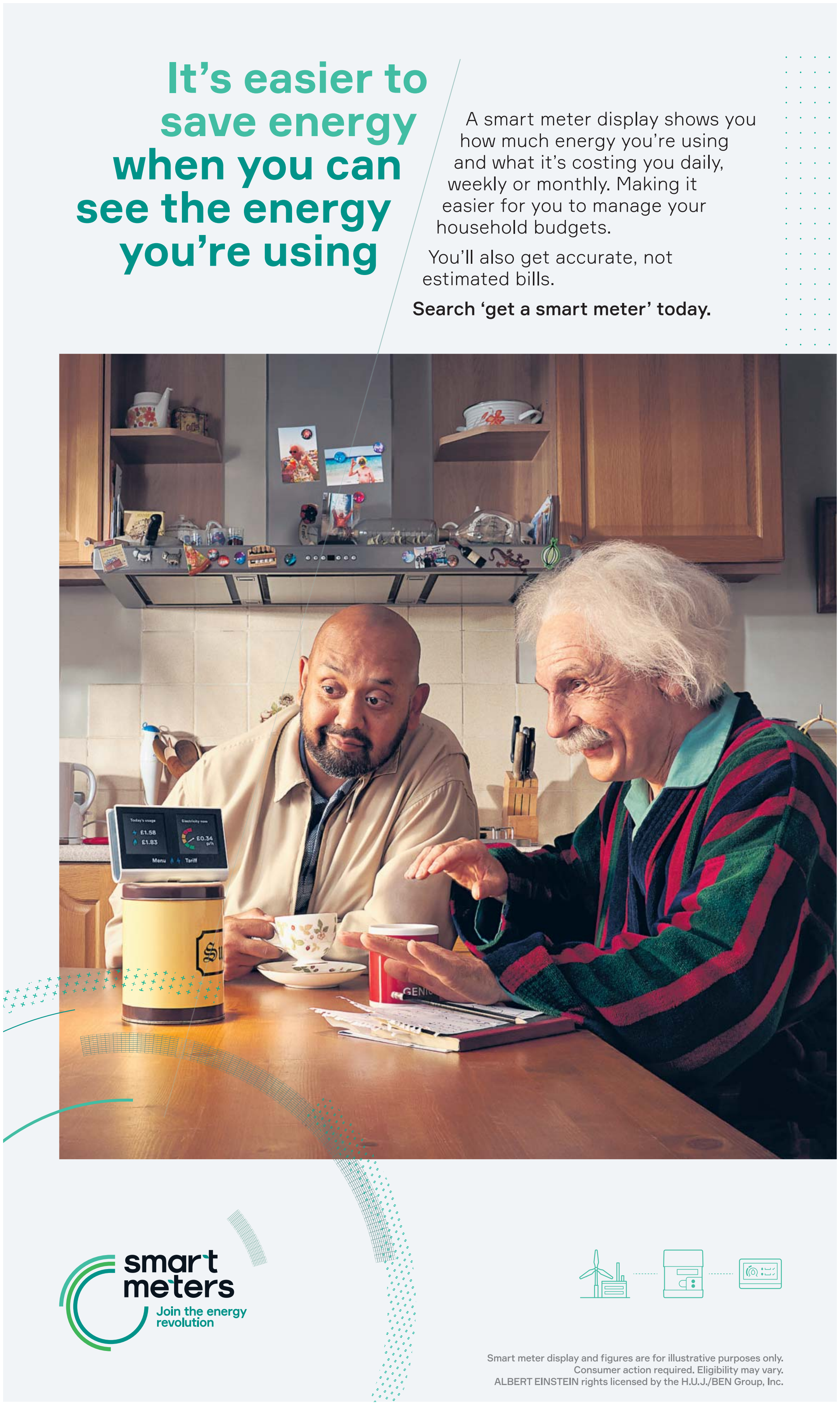
A spokesman for the Department for Transport said the TSSA vote in favour would bring the country "a step closer to fixing our railways", adding: "The tide is turning and it is clear to everyone that this offer is fair and reasonable, giving better pay to workers but delivering vital reforms to our railways. We urge the RMT to back this deal and call off their strikes."

Huw Merriman, the rail minister, met Lynch and the employers last night in an attempt to avert further disruption and "facilitate some form of agreement". After the meeting, Lynch said he had agreed to further all-industry talks but insisted that all strikes remained on.

Risk for Starmer, letters, page 32



Travellers keep warm at Paddington



Heathrow walkout averted after improved late offer

Ben Clatworthy

A strike by ground handlers at Heathrow airport was called off at the eleventh hour yesterday after their contractor made a fresh pay offer.

Four-hundred members of Unite employed by Menzies were due to walk out for 72 hours from 4am today. But the union called off the action after it secured a revised pay deal "which reflects the offer that has been accepted in cargo". The union said it would ballot members on the offer.

In a letter to members seen by The Times, Kevin Hall, the regional officer, wrote: "Unite has now officially suspended the strike action for December 16 for 72 hours so that it may meet with its full shop stewards committee tomorrow to arrange a further ballot of you, our members. In light of this … we would ask all our members to … work normally until we have the result of the forthcoming ballot."

Sources at Heathrow insisted the airport was well prepared for the strike and said the last time ground handlers walked out at Menzies no flights were cancelled. As ground handling is the responsibility of individual airlines, the Menzies strike did not affect British Airways, Heathrow's largest airline.

Airports are braced for disruption over Christmas, with more than 1,000 members of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) employed by the Home Office to man passport booths set to stage two walkouts of their own. The action, from December 23-26 and 28-31, will affect Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff and Glasgow airports, plus the port of Newhaven.

Airports are preparing for their busiest Christmas in three years, with insiders predicting that passenger numbers at some could exceed 2019 levels.

About 600 soldiers have been trained to stand in for striking Border Force staff but processing times are likely to be slower.

BEN CAWTHRA/LNP



station in west London yesterday as train timetables around the country remained heavily affected by two days of strikes

Strike means this is the last day for first-class delivery

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Royal Mail has warned customers that today is their last chance to send packages and cards first-class in time for Christmas as staff return to work after two days of strikes.

The company said it had been forced to bring forward its deadline by five days because of the industrial action.

It is already too late to send items second-class. Special and guaranteed-delivery items can be sent for Christmas until Wednesday.

The company blamed the Communications Workers Union, claiming it was "holding Christmas to ransom". The CWU accused Royal Mail of ignoring a "peace offering", saying its "sole intention" was to "destroy the livelihoods of over 115,000 postal workers". Further strikes could follow in the new year,

The dispute has been going on since the summer with Royal Mail claiming that it has now offered postal workers a pay rise of 9 per cent over 18 months.

It is also, however, calling for changes to working patterns — asking staff to work half an hour longer per day in peak periods in return for shorter hours during less busy times of the year.

Royal Mail also wants to change shift patterns to increase its ability to offer next day delivery.

The CWU has claimed these changes would lead to the "absolute destruction" of workers' rights. "They (Royal Mail) couldn't be less interested in resolving this dispute or saving Christmas. Their sole intention is to destroy the livelihoods of over 115,000 postal workers and wreck the service they provide," said Dave Ward, the CWU's general secretary.

In addition to this week's walkouts, postal workers are also due to take action on Friday December 23 and Christmas Eve.

Royal Mail said it was deploying "a range of contingency plans" to run a very limited service during the industrial action.

It has also asked all staff — including lawyers, accountants and sales personnel — to deliver and sort letters next week in a bid to get on top of the backlog caused by the strikes.

Pictures emerged earlier this week of undelivered post building up at a mail centre in Bristol. A worker said the piles had attracted the attention of a fox and rats, saying some packages had been left "ruined".

However, the company said the Bristol site could process 30,000 packages an hour and that post being stacked up was "not uncommon", with a source adding: "It gets cleared pretty quickly."

Nick Landon, Royal Mail's chief commercial officer, said: "The CWU is striking at our busiest time, holding Christmas to ransom for our customers, businesses and families across the country. We ask our customers to post early to help us deliver Christmas."

On a visit to Scotland Andy Furey, acting deputy general secretary of the CWU, said there were plans to ballot members for further strike action in the new year.

He said CWU's recent offer to Royal Mail this week was "thrown back in our face" and there are "no further talks planned at this stage".

"Unfortunately I don't believe there will be a resolution before Christmas," he said.

"But it's not just a dispute around Christmas. We will be disputing into the new year, unless Royal Mail sees sense.

"My message to Royal Mail is to come to the negotiating table and thrash out a reasonable and fair deal for our members."

Furey said the union wanted to ensure the universal service obligation was protected, which recognises Royal Mail as the designated provider of the universal postal service in the UK six days a week, with one price for anywhere and to 30 million UK addresses.

Royal Mail said the company was predicted to lose between £350-£450 million this year and needed flexibilities in the workforce to be successful in a competitive market.

Quentin Letts

Eighty years on from the frown, a respectful silence

Political Sketch



The Commons opened with a minute's remembrance of December 17, 1942, when Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary, first described the "barbarous and inhuman" persecution of Jews in Germany. After Eden's remarks, MPs rose to their feet as one. The spontaneity of that moment was powerful enough for one journalist to call it a "frown upon the conscience of mankind".

Eighty years on, reporters were not permitted to witness the silence, which was attended by four survivors of Hitler's purges. We were admitted only to see those frail visitors file out, bowing and touching their chests in thanks to Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker, who had organised the commemoration.

Matters twanged back to normality and Andrew Bowie, a shiny new trade minister, was asked why the EU was being so difficult over our seed potato exports. Bowie, 35, is full of bounce and boyish zest. He speaks at twice the speed of others — he could do the hire-purchase details at the end of car adverts — and his enthusiasm makes him a one-man rebuke to declinists. Hearing him claim that exports to the EU have leapt, one almost believed it.

Other ministers roll their eyes if asked to visit backbenchers' constituencies. Not Bowie. He volunteered to undertake fact-finding missions to places such as Caithness and, the naked sybarite, to Aldridge-Brownhills in the West Midlands. "Dynamic!" cried Bowie, darting about the dispatch box on ten toes. "Great deals! We should support companies on their exporting journeys!" A camping weekend, let alone an exporting journey, with Comrade Bowie might leave the nerves frayed.

Another who cannot be faulted for effort, albeit more flat-footed, is Alicia Kearns (C, Rutland and Melton). Kearns fancies herself a one-woman battering ram against the People's Republic of China. If that sounds like a mismatch, you're right. Beijing hasn't a hope.

Kearns, her voice a tunnel-echo of scolding pique, berated Downing Street over the resolution of the recent incident when Chinese consular officials in Manchester beat up a Hong Kong freedom campaigner. It was announced in a parliamentary written statement that those five Chinese officials were returning home. You do not need to be George Smiley to comprehend that there has been a huge row behind the scenes. Many would see the officials' departure as an elegant solution.

Kearns was less forgiving. "Fleeing like cowards!" she bawled, indignant that the envoys will not be put on trial here. "I'm afraid the government is being very opaque." The MP, who chairs the foreign affairs select committee, is outraged by opacity. Well, well. While Kearns was tromboning away, jabbing her fingers and waving her forearms, there, just in front of her, sat Richard Graham (C, Gloucester), a Mandarin and Cantonese speaker with deep and delicate experience in Beijing. His restraint as he listened to that thudding clodhopper was testament to his Foreign Office training. He later left the chamber without bothering to intervene.

Over to the Lords, where they too observed the minute's silence but, being more hospitable, allowed journalists to join the moment. Then the Lords Speaker, as is the custom, announced the latest death of a member: the crossbencher Lord Ramsbotham, prisons inspector and sometime general. A touching groan of dismay was heard from all sides.

Questions began. Peers pressed the government to rethink its scrapping of tax-free shopping for tourists. We were treated to the parliamentary tradition of a Treasury minister being piggishly obstinate, even though all logic was against him.

There was also a short debate about the increasing, maddening refusal of shops and cafés to accept cash. One learnt that the Treasury measures access to cash by the square kilometre. Why not by the square mile? A minister argued that many people preferred card payments. News from Brussels suggests this is debatable. If we paid cash in Brussels, we might find that seed potato problem soon resolved.


WILL DAX/SOLENT NEWS & PHOTO AGENCY

Pincer movement Hannah Horn, of Southsea, Hampshire, finishes one of her six murals showing marine life in the Solent



Top judge to lead inquiry into SAS execution claims

George Grylls

The Ministry of Defence has begun a judge-led inquiry into allegations of unlawful killings by SAS soldiers in Afghanistan.

Ben Wallace, the defence secretary, said the statutory investigation would look into the conduct of British forces between mid-2010 and mid-2013, following reports of summary murders of detainees. Families of the victims welcomed the decision after years of campaigning.

As many as 54 Afghan civilians may have been killed by one SAS unit during a six-month tour, a BBC *Panorama* investigation concluded this year. Claims of unlawful killings by the SAS were first reported by The Sunday Times.

In Australia, a four-year inquiry found the country's special forces were responsible for 39 unlawful killings.

The UK inquiry will be chaired by Lord Justice Haddon-Cave, who said he would begin work early next year. The inquiry will determine whether extra-judicial killings took place and, if so, whether they were covered up or adequately investigated by the Royal Military Police. "The public, and all those who serve in the military, are entitled to expect a fair, fearless and thorough examination of the facts and clear answers to the questions raised. I will seek to achieve this within a reasonable timescale," Haddon-Cave said.

The government has been challenged in the courts by the families of eight Afghan people who died, including three boys. The victims were allegedly murdered by SAS soldiers during night raids in 2011 and 2013. The deaths of members of the Saifullah and Noorzai families are now subject to judicial review.

One of the reviews brought by Leigh Day, a law firm, on behalf of a member of the Saifullah family concerns the alleged killing of his father, two brothers and a cousin in February 2011. The raid was codenamed Operation Tyburn, a reference to the historic site in London for executions. A contemporaneous email obtained last year showed that one British officer described the four deaths a few hours after the killings as the "latest massacre!"

Reacting to the news of the inquiry, one member of the Saifullah family said they wanted the investigation to unearth the truth of what happened to their relatives that night to ensure it never happened again. "I am extremely happy that there are people who value the loss of life of my family, of Afghans, enough to investigate. I hope now that an investigation has opened that those who have committed these crimes can be held responsible," the family member said.

Wallace said: "While there have been several comprehensive investigations into the events in question, if there are further lessons to learn it is right that we consider those fully to ensure all allegations are handled appropriately and in equal measure to ensure our personnel are adequately protected from unnecessary reinvestigations."

In 2014, a previous inquiry, Operation Northmoor, examined allegations of summary killings by the SAS. One of the cases involved the deaths of three children and a 20-year-old man who were killed by a British soldier in Helmand in 2012. The investigation closed with the MoD concluding that no evidence of criminality had been found.

Tessa Gregory, a partner at Leigh Day, said the MoD had announced the statutory inquiry after previously dismissing the claims of the Saifullah and Noorzai families. "It should not have taken years of litigation to get this far," she said.

"The allegations of extrajudicial killings and cover-up are of such gravity, and the concerns expressed contemporaneously within the British and Afghan army and by a reputable international organisation working on the ground in Afghanistan were so serious and so widespread, that an inquiry should have been instituted by the government years ago."

Scottish workers set to pay highest income tax in UK

Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor
Kieran Andrews Scottish Political Editor

Some people in Scotland will pay more income tax than those living elsewhere in the UK from next year.

In his budget yesterday, Scotland's deputy first minister put the higher rate of tax — payable on earnings above £43,663 — up by a penny, to 42 pence in the pound.

The top rate also goes up by a penny, to 47p, but the threshold at which it is paid is being cut from £150,000 to £125,140. The higher wages seen in recent months will also push more people into higher-rate bands.

The changes are a big departure from the ruling Scottish National Party's manifesto pledge not to alter the rates in this parliament.

It also means Scots will be paying a tax rate of 54p in the pound on any earnings between £43,663 and £50,270. That is because national insurance, which is set at Westminster, follows the thresholds set by the UK parliament.

In the rest of the UK, the higher rate of 40 per cent is paid on earnings above £50,270, while the top rate of 45 per cent kicks in above £125,140.

John Swinney, the deputy first minister, said the extra penny on tax would be spent on patient care. The Scottish Fiscal Commission said the change would raise £129 million in 2023-24. Swinney and other SNP ministers have repeatedly talked of "sustained pressure" on the public purse.

Inflation and the cost of living crisis have left public-sector unions looking for big pay deals. Rail workers and teachers are among those striking.

The income tax changes will again lead to concerns that Scotland will be seen as a more expensive place to live and work. But the Scottish government argues that many things are free, including prescriptions, some university fees and bus travel for pensioners and young people.

Swinney also announced that from April there would be no cap on the council tax local authorities can charge.

Out: Becker deported and barred from Britain for at least a decade

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor
Oliver Moody Berlin
Laurence Sleator

Boris Becker will be barred from Britain for at least a decade after he was deported to Germany yesterday.

The three-time Wimbledon champion was freed from prison eight months into a two-and-a-half-year sentence under a scheme that allows for foreign nationals to be released early if they agree to leave the country.

Becker, 55, was jailed in April for hiding £2.5 million of assets and loans to avoid paying debts. Yesterday he boarded a flight from Biggin Hill airport in Bromley, southeast London, on a private charter flight paid for by a friend.

Becker, a German, had lived in Britain since 2012 but did not apply for citizenship, which would have exempted him from deportation.

The government confirmed that Becker's deportation order would bar him from returning to the UK, where his son Amadeus, 12, lives with his ex-wife Lilly. However, a foreign offender who served a sentence of less than four years can apply to have such an order revoked after ten years. Becker, a former world No 1 and BBC pundit, was declared bankrupt in 2017 over an unpaid loan of more than £3 million on his estate in Mallorca. In total he owed creditors almost £50 million.

It emerged in May that Becker had been transferred to a lower security jail for foreign criminals awaiting deportation — category-C Huntercombe near Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire — after being held at category-B Wandsworth prison in southwest London.

Becker's lawyer Christian Oliver Moser said he had "served his sentence and is not subject to any penal restrictions in Germany".

Sources in Becker's homeland suggest he may move back to Leimen, five miles from the picturesque city of Heidelberg. He still owns a property there worth £1.8 million, where his mother, Elvira, 87, lives in a granny flat.

There are also reports that Becker plans to give a tell-all interview to a Munich-based broadcaster as part of a six-figure deal, in addition to featuring in an American documentary.

A brief excerpt from the as-yet unreleased and untitled programme shows a tearful Becker discussing his impending sentencing. "I don't know what to make of it," he says. "I face [the sentence]. I'm not going to hide or run away. [I will] accept whatever sentence I'm going to get."

The clip is believed to be from a two-part documentary by Alex Gibney, the American director who previously made an Oscar-nominated film about the fall of the energy company Enron.

He has also explored topics such as Scientology, President Putin's regime, the journalist Hunter S Thompson and the disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong.

Private school sorry for pupil Hitler salutes

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

A leading private school has apologised after pupils performed *Sieg Heil* salutes during a play about Adolf Hitler.

The incident at Millfield School in Somerset, which charges up to £14,610 a term for boarders, came hours before the start of Yom Kippur.

The play, *Adolf*, features the actor and playwright Pip Utton performing in front of a large Nazi flag while dressed as the dictator. Utton, who has previously taken the show to the Edinburgh Fringe, said he had "manipulated" the children at the end of the show, to demonstrate "how easy it is".



Pupils salute at the end of a show the school says it should not have put on

The father of one Jewish pupil said he was horrified to see photos of pupils in the audience laughing while performing Nazi salutes. "It made me feel sick," he told the Jewish Chronicle. "What on earth were the teachers thinking?

"It would not be appropriate to give this kind of play the green light for schoolchildren at any time, least of all on the eve of Yom Kippur. The school must have known of the content, and if not, it should have. There is no excuse for this disgraceful error of judgment."

Utton told the newspaper that he had invited the pupils to "thank the technicians because they rarely receive recognition". He continued: "I said I wanted them to perform a special show of gratitude by raising their right arms in the air, then bring their hand down to clap their knee. As their hands went up, I told them: 'It seemed to work in Berlin.' I was in no way attempting to glorify that horrible, horrible salute. The point was to show how people can be manipulated and how easy it is. Believe me, it is shocking for me to see it happen. They got the fact that it was kind of a joke because they were laughing."

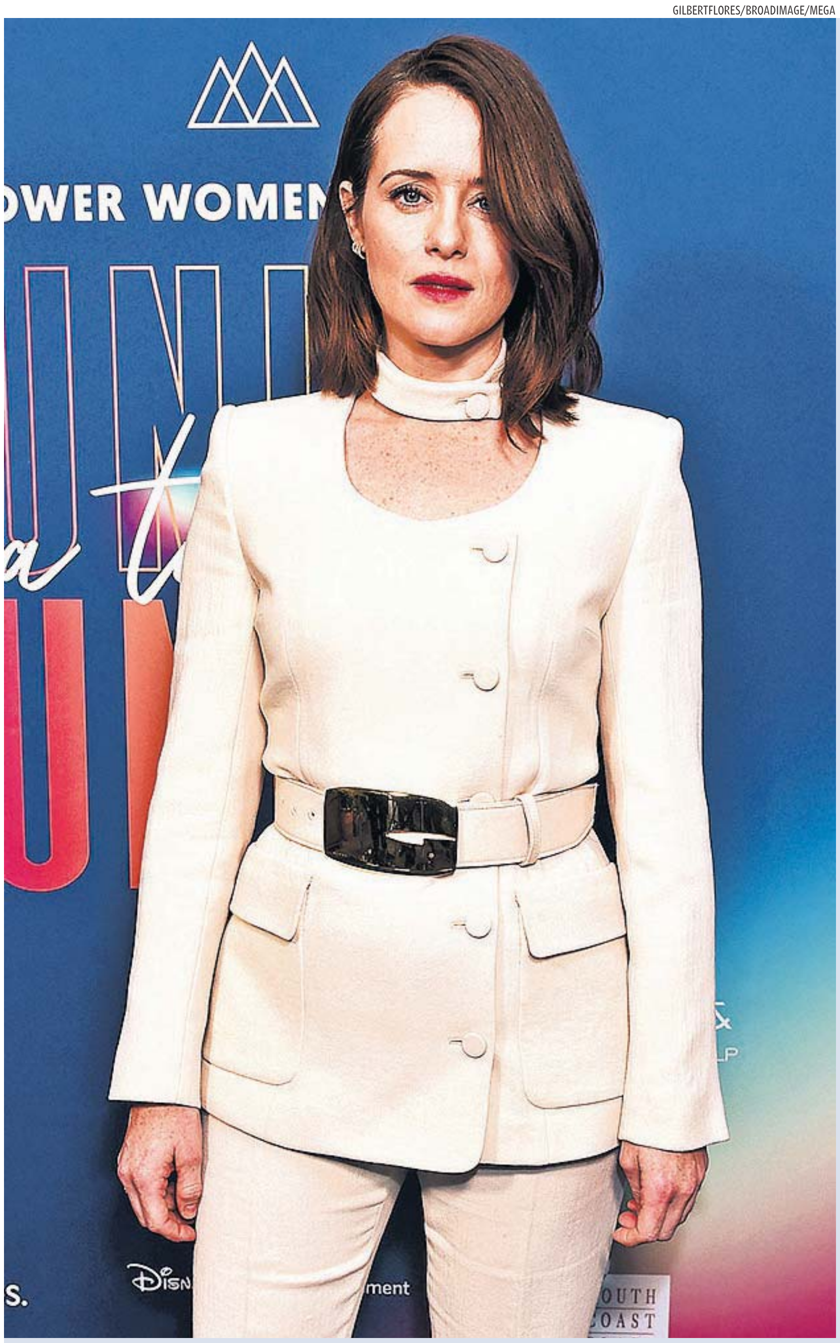
Pupils who complained were told to delete photos they had taken on their phones, the Jewish Chronicle reported.

Gavin Horgan, headmaster of Millfield, said pupils should not have been encouraged to "role play such actions" and added: "We should not have staged this play. We are sorry for the hurt that has been caused and we have changed our approach to vetting performances so that this will never happen again."

Horgan told The Times that no parents contacted him to complain after the performance in October, adding: "The play is critically acclaimed and has been performed in many schools over the last 25 years. It deals with shocking historical events and is intended to educate about manipulation and intolerance."

Utton describes his Hitler show as an educational exploration of the Nazi leader's fascism and "its ideological justification, its poisoned utopias" while making the audience face "their own intolerance" and "an understanding of the mindset of a nation that could allow such a man to take control".

GILBERTFLORES/BROADIMAGE/MEGA



Claire Foy attending an annual forum for women in entertainment held in Santa Monica, California, this week. She previously told the court how the stalking had affected her life

Foy stalker faces UK travel ban

A stalker who targeted the *Crown* actress Claire Foy should be banned from entering the UK, a judge has said (Laurence Sleator writes).

Jason Penrose, 49, a US citizen, sent thousands of emails and letters to Foy, including one referring to rape, and turned up at her home in December last year, repeatedly ringing the doorbell.

Last month he pleaded guilty to stalking Foy.

At Wood Green crown court yesterday, Judge David Aaronberg KC adjourned sentencing until January 20 so he could ensure the Home Office could deport Penrose.

The judge added: "I want to make it part of any restraining order that he can't enter the country."

Foy, 38, who played the Queen in the first two series of the Netflix hit, wrote to the court describing Penrose's actions as "traumatic" and affecting "every part" of her life, leaving her suffering sleepless nights.

Penrose has been receiving psychiatric treatment for 11 months.

The judge said: "Ms Foy wants to know what is going to happen to him.

"He wants to know what is going to happen to him. But I'm afraid I need something more either from the Home Office or the doctors."

Tennis star's husband cleared of rape after claim he's 'boring in bed'

Laurence Sleator

The former British tennis player Anne Keothavong's husband has been cleared of rape after a former girlfriend described him as a "boring lover".

The jury was told that Andrew Bretherton, 49, was a "respectful gentleman" who was not very interested in sex before unanimously acquitting him of two charges of rape relating to an alleged incident more than 14 years ago.

The Oxford-educated lawyer married the former British No 1 in 2015 and the couple have two children.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, alleged that in May 2008 at Bretherton's Kensington flat, he pinned her face-down on a bed as she struggled to breathe. She said she was raped vaginally and anally. Bretherton said the intercourse was consensual.

The defence said inconsistencies had emerged in her testimony, with the woman saying they went on four dates when Bretherton could recall only two.



Anne Keothavong called her husband "a fantastic person"

She also alleged he had played the song *Welcome to the Jungle* by Guns N' Roses on a silver boombox before the attack, but Bretherton said he had never owned a silver boombox or a CD or tape featuring the song. Bretherton's former girlfriends described him as a "boring lover" and "respectful gentleman" who was not particularly interested in sex.

The woman had refused to give police access to information that may have been relevant, jurors were told.

She had visited a rape crisis centre, reporting the attack in October 2008, but refused to press charges on three occasions.

Keothavong, 39, had earlier told the court that her husband, whom she has known since 2011, was a "fantastic person" who "has never been remotely aggressive". Breaking down in tears at points during her testimony, she said: "The Andrew I know is a fantastic person, he is truly a decent, decent man who makes me laugh every day, who makes me feel good about myself, and a fantastic, fantastic father."

Judge Jane Rowley told jurors: "The common-sense view was clearly shown in this case and you came to the right verdicts."

She told Bretherton: "You held your head high and answered all the questions. I wish you and all your family the very best for the future."

News

Smart motorways miss vital safety targets

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

Smart motorways are failing to meet key safety targets, an independent review has found.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR), the regulator, found that technology to detect stopped vehicles did so in between 59.6 and 79.6 per cent of cases depending on the region, failing all safety targets. National Highways' target is 80 per cent detection on "all lane running" smart motorway sections, where there is no hard shoulder.

When the technology works, stranded vehicles should be detected within 20 seconds. Four out of the government-owned company's five regions are also failing this target, with average times of between 43 and 65 seconds.

Motoring groups responded to the findings by demanding that the inside lane of all smart motorways be closed with a red X on overhead gantries until the technology is proven to work.

The ORR found that false detection rates ranged between 63.8 and 83.5 per cent of all cases. The target is 15 per cent. False detections trigger messages on gantries warning of an obstruction when there is none, risking complacency in drivers and dramatically increase the work of control centre staff.

John Larkinson, chief executive of the ORR, told National Highways to "urgently improve its performance".

In January, the government said that it would pause the rollout of future smart motorways for at least two years amid concerns about their safety.

Grant Shapps, then transport secretary, said that no more motorways would be converted to all lane running until five years of safety data had been collected on existing stretches.

Edmund King, president of the AA, said: "If there are doubts about the technology, then the motorways are not smart and we should revert to tried and tested methods. National Highways needs to urgently rectify the situation, but until such time we call on the transport secretary to run a pilot scheme which reinstates the inside lane as a hard shoulder."

About 10 per cent of England's network is smart motorway. National Highways' figures show that stopped drivers are twice as likely to be killed or seriously injured on smart motorway as on motorway with a hard shoulder.

The ORR praised National Highways for having retrofitted stopped vehicle detection technology to all sections of smart motorway without a hard shoulder sooner than planned.

National Highways promised to improve the technology within six months and said it would spend £105 million to replace faulty and obsolescent equipment.

Ministers agreed this year to provide £900 million for better safety, to include 150 new emergency refuge areas, cutting the distance between them to 0.75 miles in most cases.

In October, a technical failure left National Highways control room staff unable to activate signs to warn drivers of stranded vehicles for seven hours.

Behind the story

Removing the hard shoulder and replacing it with a live running lane was presented as the answer to an impossible question in 2006 when the Highways Agency (as it was then) said it could cut congestion and improve safety (Ben Clatworthy writes).

Labour championed the idea and later governments embraced it, despite a public backlash.

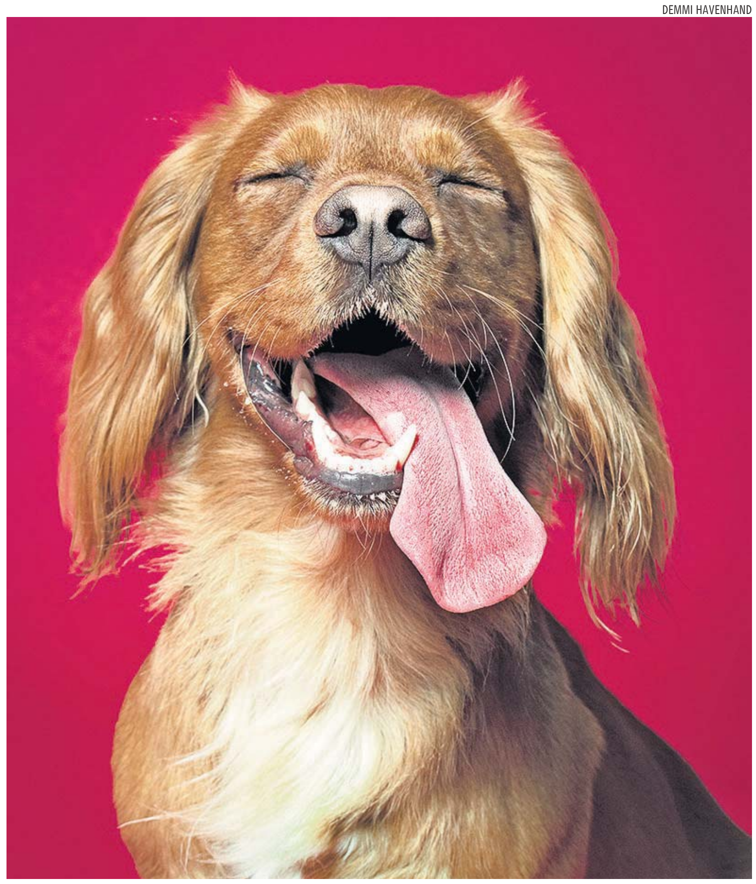
As budgets were cut the distance between emergency laybys grew and substandard technology was used.

Technology is still clearly lacking, but many would like all-lane running scrapped altogether and the hard shoulder reinstated, with a solid line painted on the road and under the whole sorry saga.



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DEMMI HAVENHAND



Bone idol **Ralph the dog poses for Demmi Havenhand, 18, earning her second place in the pet portraits category of the RSPCA's young photographer awards**

Strep A alternatives on offer

Kat Lay Health Editor

Pharmacists will be able to offer Strep A patients antibiotics in different forms to those prescribed by GPs, as the number of child deaths from infection rose to 19.

UK Health Security Agency data showed that 16 patients under 18 had died in England from severe infection since September. The other deaths were in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The bacterial infection can cause a mild sore throat and scarlet fever, sometimes requiring treatment with antibiotics. Yesterday the government issued "serious shortage protocols" for three penicillin medicines, after officials said penicillin prescriptions have increased five times compared with three weeks ago.

The protocols will "mitigate local supply issues" and allow pharmacists to legally supply specified alternatives to a medicine, without GP consent.

This applies to certain liquid solutions of Phenoxymethylpenicillin and will mean pharmacists can supply alternative formulations, such as tablets, in their place if out of stock.

Usually pharmacists can only supply the exact medicine prescribed so the move "will make things easier for patients and GPs" said Will Quince, the health minister.

TMS

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Duty delays Gove's tome

While Boris Johnson has time at last, between lucrative speaking gigs, to write his long-overdue tome on Shakespeare, Michael Gove's return to government has again delayed his magnum opus. During the mayfly premiership of Liz Truss, Gove told Andrew Roberts' *Secrets of Statecraft* that he was resuming battle with his Life of Bolingbroke, an 18th-century Tory politician. The interview has just been released, with Gove back in office and the book back on ice. Maybe one day he will earn the advance he was given in 2004. Viscount Bolingbroke was a brilliant orator, with a licentious private life, who repeatedly came back into the fold despite an insatiable appetite for plotting and intrigue. It is hard to see what attracted Gove to him.

MPs wrapped up warm to meet their monarch on his visit to parliament this week. Sir Desmond Swayne was branded a "cossack" by the DUP's Ian Paisley after the Tory backbencher wore a black Russian-style fur hat, while Labour's Julie Elliott caught the eye with a fabulous leopardskin coat. "Careful," a fellow MP said as the King passed by. "He might shoot you."



GRIT IN THE OYSTER
When Goldie visited Buckingham Palace in 2016 to receive an MBE, the musician and actor felt that he couldn't leave without a souvenir. Some might have swiped a pen or a loo roll, if not a corgi, but his memento was rather mundane. "I got a massive scoop of gravel," admits the former *Strictly* star, above. Kneeling to tie his shoelace, he shoved a handful of grit into his pocket, then filled his socks before limping off to safety. Some might say this isn't much of a trophy, but Goldie is clearly ahead on aggregate.

NUTCRACKER SWEAT
Mechanical failure has struck the Royal Opera House at a bad time: its trapdoor has broken and can't be fixed for weeks, causing a problem for the magically growing Christmas tree in *The Nutcracker*. Instead of it rising from the bowels of the theatre, technicians have found another way to create a tree that swells with Tchaikovsky's music, but they won't give away the secret. It is not the first time the hatch has caused trouble to the Covent Garden *Nutcracker*. In 2007, the Mouse King's tail got stuck in the trapdoor and the thread began to unravel during the battle scene, tangling the other dancers in a giant rat's cradle.

WHAT, NO JEEVES!?
Fergus Butler-Gallie, a clergyman from Kent, and Anna Sanchez O'Brien, a 13-year-old schoolgirl from Essex, are the first winners of the PG Wodehouse Society's essay competition. Fifty-six entries were received from ten countries, which the judging panel, including your diarist, considered last month with barely any fisticuffs under the chairing of the Oxford English professor Sophie Ratcliffe. Stephen Fry, who played Wodehouse's immortal valet in the 1990s, joined in via video link from Hollywood but he was let down by technology. After a series of crackles, bleeps and unhelpful screen freezes, we finally made clear contact with Fry just at the moment the actor yelled: "F***ing Microsoft!" I think Jeeves might have preferred a bon mot from Spinoza.

PATRICK KIDD

Spare a thought for bugs: they feel pain

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

Using pesticides and farming insects for food could cause "mass suffering" because many species of bugs can feel pain, academics have warned.

Researchers at Queen Mary University of London and the London School of Economics analysed 300 scientific papers and said: "Evidence that insects feel pain is accumulating".

They suggested that animal welfare laws be extended to ensure that farming, killing or experimenting on insects must be "humane".

One study by Queen Mary scientists, published in July, said the possibility that insects felt pain was "important morally", noting that "insects are subjected to potentially painful stimuli in research and farming".

They found that insects have an ability called "nociception" that allows them to "detect potentially or actually damaging stimuli". In humans' brains such signals translate into a sensation we know as pain. The acute discomfort is a warning either to flee or to stop doing what causes the sensation.

So far it has been unclear that insects experience pain in a way that causes distress. The researchers discovered that fruit flies will move away from a heated surface while cockroaches will flee when stung by a wasp. Male mantids, however, do not try to escape while being eaten by their partner during mating, and some insects keep feeding "normally after injury". They said the desire to procreate or to feed could override an insect's wish to escape an unpleasant sensation, suggesting that an insect may still feel pain but that its brain can suppress the sensation.

The researchers said insects had a mechanism called "descending control" of pain, allowing them to control their response to painful stimuli.

They said: "It is conceivable that a form of pain perception exists in insects and can be modulated", adding: "[It is] at least plausible that insects have painful experiences."

In a follow-up article for the Conversation website this week, the researchers said they also found that the way bumblebees react to harmful stimuli is "similar to pain responses in humans and other animals we accept feel pain".

The wrote: "Pesticides kill trillions more wild insects every year. The actual cause of death is often paralysis, asphyxiation, or dissolving the internal organs, sometimes over several days.

"If insects feel pain, insect farming and pest control would cause mass suffering. Yet animal welfare debates and laws almost universally ignore insects."

The article, co-written by Matilda Gibbons, a PhD candidate at Queen Mary, said: "Flies and cockroaches satisfy six of the criteria . . . this amounts to strong evidence for pain. Bees, wasps, and ants fulfil four criteria, while butterflies, moths, crickets, and grasshoppers fulfil three."

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Police chief facing misconduct inquiry takes role at watchdog

David Woode Crime Correspondent
Fiona Hamilton
Crime and Security Editor

A former chief constable who led the investigation into alleged sexual abuse by Sir Edward Heath and later resigned over allegations of serious misconduct, is taking up a police scrutiny role.

Mike Veale, who previously headed Wiltshire and Cleveland police forces, will become the interim chief executive officer at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. His salary has not been disclosed.

In his new role, Veale, 56, will be the senior civil servant, alongside Rupert Matthews, responsible for holding Rob Nixon, the new chief constable for Leicestershire police, to account.

Veale has faced criticism for "raking in" £100,000-a-year pro rata as a strategic adviser to Matthews, the Conservative police and crime commissioner for Leicestershire, while facing a gross misconduct investigation.

Veale is facing "serious" allegations concerning inappropriate behaviour towards colleagues, discrimination and unprofessional behaviour following an investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

The allegations relate to his ten months leading Cleveland police. Veale resigned in January 2019, a day after misconduct allegations were referred to the police watchdog. Veale said: "As the investigation moves into its fifth year I still do not feel it is appropriate or indeed acceptable to comment."

Matthews said it was "inappropriate for Veale's position to be publicly questioned" but he would "review the situation regularly". Lord Bach, a Labour peer and former Leicestershire police and crime commissioner, said Veale's new role was "disturbing" for the force and the community.

Veale led Wiltshire police and the inquiry into Heath, the former Tory prime minister who died in 2005. Veale's contract was not extended after accusations he leaked confidential information about the inquiry and destroyed his mobile phone to cover his tracks. The IOPC cleared him of causing damage "deliberately or with the motive to conceal any information".

In August last year the IOPC said there was "sufficient evidence to indicate Veale breached the standards of professional behaviour".

Cleveland's police and crime commissioner's office said it would be inappropriate to comment.

Judges may force convicts to attend sentencing

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Labour has pledged to give judges the power to force convicted offenders to attend sentencing hearings after Zara Aleena's killer refused to turn up.

Jordan McSweeney, 29, was sentenced on Wednesday to serve a minimum of 38 years following his conviction for murdering the aspiring lawyer, but would not leave the cells at the Old Bailey to be sentenced by Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb.

The judge condemned his decision, saying he had "no spine whatsoever".

Currently, judges have no power to compel defendants to attend court for sentencing. Labour said this added to distress for victims and their families.

The party laid out plans to give judges the option to force defendants to attend court for sentencing.

This would include provisions to review punishment for non-attendance, including charging offenders with contempt of court.

Other defendants who have refused to attend court for sentencing include Sabina Nessa's killer and Emma Tustin, who murdered her six-year-old stepson. Steve Reed MP, Labour's shadow justice secretary, said: "Labour will always put victims of crime first."

SALLY ANDERSON/ALAMY



Visual feast The Society of Scottish Artists' 130th anniversary exhibition opens at the Royal Scottish Academy tomorrow with a mix of modern and older art on show



Product, price and availability are correct at time of going to press but may change and are subject to availability.

Child among dead in Channel sinking

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor
Henry Zeffman Associate Political Editor
Adam Sage Dunkirk

A child was among the four people who died when a boat carrying migrants sank in the Channel on Wednesday. Four more people are feared to be missing, according to testimonies given by the 39 survivors.

The Home Office has yet to confirm the ages or identities of those who died after the inflatable dinghy punctured, causing it to capsize. The search and rescue operation resumed yesterday but was due to be called off late last night after no further bodies were found.

One of the four casualties was a teenager under the age of 18, said Roger Gough, the leader of Kent council. According to government sources, at least eight of those rescued were unaccompanied children, including an 11-year-old Afghan boy. Social services have taken them into care.

Last night questions were raised over whether French officials reacted quickly enough. The boat was in French waters for 33 minutes after the migrants raised the alert and in that time the French coastguard failed to begin a rescue operation. Instead they passed the information to their British counterparts and to nearby fishing and merchant vessels, according to the French Maritime Prefecture for the Channel and North Sea. Simon Ling, head of lifeboats at the RNLI, said the scene when rescuers arrived at the capsized boat was harrowing.

Home Office officials believe that the dinghy left France on Tuesday night, less than 12 hours after Rishi Sunak, the prime minister, had announced new measures to combat Channel crossings.

The 39 migrants who survived were among 401 migrants who crossed the Channel on Wednesday in eight boats, the Ministry of Defence said.

Home Office sources expressed surprise that their intelligence had not alerted them to the specific journey. Efforts to disrupt crossings include drones monitoring activity and the tracking of the phone numbers of many Albanians operating in northern France. The journey on Tuesday night appears to have had few Albanians on board, which officials believe is why the boat evaded government intelligence.

Last night the Home Office slipped through a change to immigration law that will allow it to detain migrants for up to four days, up from the present 24 hours.

The move, which will take effect from January 5, will give Home Office officials more time to conduct security, identity and medical checks.

The plans are likely to cause controversy but they can be enforced using a statutory instrument, which means it will not be voted on in parliament.

Ministers expect a legal challenge to be mounted against the move.

ELLIOTT FRANKS



Raring to go A Force India-Mercedes Formula One car could fetch £100,000 in Bonhams's London classic car auction today

£1.6m for skipper injured on superyacht

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

An experienced sailor is in line to receive £1.6 million after suffering a brain injury while crewing a £7m superyacht at a regatta off the Isle of Wight.

Adam Prior, a trained skipper, had to stop seafaring after he was struck in the face by a 10kg steel pulley during a race in 2015 aboard the Eleonora E, a replica of an early 20th-century schooner lauded by experts as an "incomparable" masterpiece of design.

The superyacht is owned through a company called Peras by Zbynek Zak, a retired businessman.

Prior, 40, sued Peras, blaming his accident on sailing in unsafe weather and lack of maintenance of the rigging. At a hearing in the High Court in London, the company denied all blame and disputed the amount of compensation. Lawyers for Peras said Prior had been "the author of his own misfortune".

After a four-day trial, Judge Richard Davison ruled that the sailor and the ship's owners shared equal blame. Prior was awarded up to £1.6 million in compensation, not the £3.2 million he had claimed. The judge said that Prior had been negligent in crossing an area of the ship known as the "danger triangle", where heavy blocks moved freely.



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Breakfast will be this year's perfect present

THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES
CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Tom Ball Northern Correspondent

JON SUPER FOR THE TIMES





Broken Cross Primary Academy and Nursery pupils eating breakfast, above, with Donna Lewis, headteacher, below

When a pupil didn't arrive for school one morning, teachers at Broken Cross Primary Academy and Nursery rang her home to ask if she was all right.

Donna Lewis, the headteacher, said: "Her mother apologised and said that she hadn't brought her in because she couldn't afford to heat the water to give her a bath. In 30 years of teaching, I've never seen anything like that before."

It's just one example that reveals the impact the cost of living crisis is having on the lives of pupils and their parents.

In the past few months, the school in Macclesfield, Cheshire, has started a free clothes giveaway and it plans to offer anyone in need the use of showers and washing machines.

But among the biggest concerns for the school is hunger. For more than six years Broken Cross has offered free morning meals to pupils with Magic Breakfast, one of three charities chosen for The Times and Sunday Times Christmas Appeal. Founded in 2003, the charity provides healthy breakfasts every day to 200,000 children at 1,000 schools in deprived areas of England and Scotland.

This time last year, the school gave free breakfasts to about 40 of its 220 pupils. That figure has now doubled. "We are seeing families struggle who have never been in this situation before," said Lewis.

Teachers now watch out for pupils asking for second helpings at lunch or who look malnourished. Parents do not have to sign up to send their children for the free breakfast and can choose how and when to drop them off. This, Lewis says, helps with "destigmatising" and encourages those to use the service who might otherwise feel too proud.

Children can come from 7.30am and have a choice of cereals, beans, bagels and toast, all provided by Magic Breakfast. Broken Cross pays about £140 a week for staffing and milk.

Nearly half of all pupils at Broken Cross are eligible for free school meals.

The latest Food Foundation research shows four million children don't have enough food at home, a 50 per cent rise since April.

A Leeds University study found that pupils who regularly eat breakfast achieve two GCSE grades higher than those who do not.

When The Times visited, children were having breakfast in the school hall, reading books given to them by Marcus Rashford's Book Club. Lewis said: "A good healthy meal is so important for children's learning, because when you're hungry all you are thinking about is when your next meal will come and nothing else."

But the school itself is also bearing the brunt of rocketing energy costs, paying £7,700 more than last year.

"We are doing all we can to stay firm and help support the community, and things like Magic Breakfast are a great help," said Lewis.

Every £1 donated to Magic Breakfast will be doubled, up to £300,000, thanks to the generosity of Barratt Developments PLC, which pledged £75,000, and two individual donors.

To donate

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BEN CAWTHRA/LNP



Frozen fish The fountains at Trafalgar Square dripped with icicles as the temperature in central London fell. Weather, page 63

Heritage body's tips on heating old homes

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

For the one in six homes built before 1900, old-world charm means plenty of shivers this winter. However, the 21st century is seeking to amend the lax energy efficiency of the Victorian era.

Historic England has published guidance for listed and older properties on how to save energy this winter.

Cheaper, immediate options include insulation of water tanks and temporary blocks for chimneys.

More expensive, long-term solutions include the installation of low-carbon energy sources. Solar cells and hydroelectric power are already in use at the Sutton Hoo burial site and Cragside house, Northumberland, respectively.

The renewed drive comes as architects and other industry professionals seek to shift rebuilding programmes away from building new properties and towards retrofitting old ones.

This year, Historic England published a new climate-change policy, aiming to achieve net zero by 2040, ten years ahead of the government target.

Catherine Dewar, director of Historic England's Climate Change Programme, said: "People living in older properties have told us that they want to play their part in getting to net zero."

$10bn fund to halt 'ecological disaster'

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

The UK, EU and other countries will try to unblock stalled talks on a global deal to avert "ecological disaster on Earth" by committing $10 billion a year in nature finance for poorer nations.

Ministers from around the world, including the environment secretary, Thérèse Coffey, arrived yesterday at the Cop15 UN biodiversity conference in Montreal.

Financing for developing countries to stem the loss of species and habitats is a key sticking point. African and South American delegates walked out of talks over the issue on Wednesday.

Steven Guilbeault, Canada's environment minister, told The Times: "We agreed on mobilising $100 billion [a year] on climate change. I don't see why we couldn't agree on something along these lines for nature protection." Canada is leading the talks along with the Chinese government, which was originally due to host the summit in 2020.

Guilbeault said his message to ministers arriving today was that financial commitments are crucial to speed up slow progress on the draft of a new nature deal, known as the Global Biodiversity Framework, adding: "I think donor countries need to show the developing world that we are serious about resource mobilisation for nature. They need to hear that loud and clear.

"I think many in the global south feel that they're not being heard on this.

"This is really important. This is key to helping unlock other parts of the negotiations.

"If developing countries feel that we're being serious about this, I think the rest of the conversations and negotiations will go more easily."

Rich nations promised developing countries $100 billion a year by 2020 at the Copenhagen climate conference in 2009. Last night $10 billion a year was expected to be committed. Australia, Canada and Japan are among the countries providing the finance, due to start immediately and run until 2025.

The UK has brokered the deal and will deliver its share through an existing £3 billion pot of financing announced last year by Boris Johnson.

The negotiations are at a critical juncture. The 196 countries at the talks have not yet agreed on headline goals, such as a commitment to make 30 per cent of Earth's land and oceans protected areas by 2030. Negotiators are officially due to reach a deal on Monday.

Tony Juniper, the chairman of Natural England who is part of the UK delegation, said the next few days are vital to "avoid an ecological disaster on planet Earth".

The UK was also expected to announce millions of pounds of funding for countries to meet the 2030 protected area goal.

Guilbeault described the UK as an "incredible ally" on efforts to reach an ambitious new biodiversity agreement.





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News

Universities facing creep of self-censorship, says minister

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor
Mike Wade

Universities face a "growing creep of self-censorship", an education minister warned yesterday hours after students forced the cancellation of the screening of a documentary on women's rights.

Claire Coutinho, whose responsibilities include freedom of speech in education, said: "Free speech has been the bedrock of progress in our society for centuries. Without the freedom to speak, to express our opinions, we cannot have progress.

"However, that right is under threat in the very institutions where it should be the most treasured. It is vital that we take active steps to protect it now and for future generations." Coutinho's comments came at a seminar organised by the Office for Students, the independent regulator. Its director, Susan Lapworth, said: "To conflate what may be lawful speech with harassment may act to curtail free speech."

The warnings came after the screening of a documentary billed as a "defence of women's rights" was scrapped at Edinburgh University, amid claims that it was transphobic.

About 150 would-be audience members had waited in corridors during a 90-minute standoff with protesters.

Student activists issued a statement condemning *Adult Human Female*, a film they said "hinges on the assertion that trans women are men".

The first venue for the screening, organised by Academics for Academic Freedom, was occupied by protesters in the afternoon, hours before the scheduled start time. News of a replacement venue appeared to reach the event's organisers and protesters at the same time, allowing some of the latter group to run ahead and occupy that site, too.

Adult Human Female is described as a critique of "trans ideology", which follows its spread over the past decade.

The protesters issued a six-page rebuttal of the film which began: "We have to be intolerant of intolerance in order to have a tolerant society."

The Edinburgh branch of UCU, the union for academics, had opposed the screening, but a spokeswoman for the university said it stood by the decision to allow the screening "as part of our commitment to freedom of expression". They said the event was cancelled only when "safety could no longer be guaranteed for all present".

Gender-change book on list for toddlers

Laurence Sleator

A fictional toddler who changes gender against the wishes of their parents features in a reading list aimed at children aged two to four published by the LGBT charity Stonewall.

The charity, which supports gender self-determination, has written a book catalogue for children that contains five works on trans inclusion. One, *10,000 Dresses*, by Marcus Ewert, features a child called Bailey who dreams of wearing extravagant dresses. Bailey's mother insists her child is a boy: "Bailey, what are you talking about? You're a boy. Boys don't wear dresses!"

When Bailey says, "I don't feel like a boy", she replies: "You are one, Bailey, and that's that." It ends with Bailey, who is referred to with she/her pronouns, fleeing her home and living as a girl.

Tanya Carter, of the Safe Schools Alliance, told The Daily Telegraph that all children should see their families represented in books. "But instead of that we're reinforcing gender stereotypes that if a boy puts on a dress they are a girl, when in fact they are just a child playing in the dressing-up box who shouldn't have an adult agenda enforced on them."

Stonewall said: "We make no apology for wanting future generations to grow up understanding that LGBT people exist and are valid."

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF BUILDING



Let the earth bring forth grass This image of an abandoned church in Italy is one of 12 finalists for the Chartered Institute of Building's annual photography contest

Terror on thrill ride as cable snaps

Laurence Sleator

A "sling shot" fairground ride at London's Winter Wonderland attraction has been closed after a cable snapped and its pod crashed into a support beam, leaving two boys dangling in mid-air.

The ride in Hyde Park ejects riders inside a pod about 50m into the air on a bungee at up to 60mph.

There were screams and shouts as the ride malfunctioned on Wednesday night, sending the spherical cage clattering into the support mast.

By the time the emergency services arrived, the cage had been lowered, allowing the two boys to walk free. They left the scene after being checked by medical staff.

The accident happened when the pod was released and the elastic cable supporting the left-hand side of the illuminated structure broke. The pod crashed into the metal support structure and the pair were tossed around as the pod spun round in the air. Video of the incident shows the boys dangling metres from the ground, to gasps from shocked onlookers.

Staff at Winter Wonderland, which has been running in Hyde Park since 2005, blocked access to the ride. Another video later showed London fire brigade crews arriving at the park.

Winter Wonderland has grown rapidly in recent years and now draws an estimated 2.5 million visitors between November and January. It has more than a hundred rides, live shows and an ice rink.

Last weekend police confirmed that a 24-year-old man had been stabbed nearby but no arrests were made. At the Winter Wonderland in Cardiff last month three people were injured on the Sizzler ride and an investigation has been launched.

In 2019 Jackie Armstrong, 35, an acrobat, was taken to hospital after she fractured the base of her spine in a 12ft fall at Winter Wonderland in London.

A Winter Wonderland spokesman said: "We can confirm that a technical issue involving the reverse bungee occurred on Wednesday evening. Both riders were safely escorted off the ride, checked by our on-site medics and were not injured. Safety is our highest priority and the ride is closed while further investigation takes place. All of our rides undergo rigorous and regular safety checks by experienced members of staff trained in health and safety.

"All other attractions at Winter Wonderland are operating as normal."





The two boys on the "reverse bungee" ride were left dangling after a cable failed and the pod hit a support mast

Death toll in Jersey blast reaches nine

Will Humphries

Jersey police have found a ninth body among the debris of a block of flats after an explosion last weekend.

All residents have been accounted for after the blast ripped through the block in the capital, St Helier, at about 4am on Saturday.

Seven of those who died were named as Peter Bowler, 72, Raymond (Raymie) Brown, 71, Romeu and Louise De Almeida, 67 and 64, Derek and Sylvia Ellis, 61 and 73, and Billy Marsden, 63.

Robin Smith, the chief of police, said in a statement: "The number of islanders confirmed to have died in the blast is now nine." The search operation would continue until the site was cleared, he said.

Smith said on Sunday that a gas leak was the likely cause of the blast but Jo Cox, chief officer at Island Energy, said the flats affected were not connected to the gas network.

The island's fire service has become the subject of an independent investigation after it emerged that officers were called to the flats on Friday evening, hours before the explosion.

Paul Brown, head of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service, said that he wanted the public to be assured of a "relentless drive for the truth through facts", adding "that's why I'm determined that there should be an independent view of the cause of the fire and the explosion".



In Scotland and Wales, in store alcohol prices may be higher and alcohol may not be sold before 10am in accordance with Scottish laws. Specially Selected Crémant du Jura 75cl, £8.99 per 75cl. Specially Selected Crémant de Bordeaux Brut Rosé 75cl, £9.49 per 75cl. Prosecco Rosé Metallic 75cl, £9.99 per 75cl. Buck's Fizz 75cl, £2.29 per 75cl. Photography shows serving suggestion. Products and prices may vary in Scotland, Wales, Aldi Local and online.

drinkaware.co.uk for the facts
Please drink responsibly

Hospital clerk with back pain told: 'We don't do sick here'

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A private hospital favoured by Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Moss must pay £75,000 to a clerk after she was bullied for taking time off with back pain.

The St John and St Elizabeth Hospital in St John's Wood, northwest London, was renowned for its maternity centre, once dubbed the "poshest place to push".

In addition to Paltrow and Moss, a raft of celebrities have checked in to the hospital, including the actress Kate Winslet and the model Jerry Hall.

Doctors in its maternity ward, which has since shut, were known for advocating natural birthing methods, including the use of yoga, massage oils and pools.

An employment tribunal was told that Elham Kalhor accused her female manager of putting "undue pressure" on her to come into work when she was unwell, and that she had been told: "We don't do sick here."

The administrator alleged that the manager had "mocked" her when she told them about her worsening condition by asking whether she was getting a blue badge, given to drivers with disabilities.

Kalhor also faced a disciplinary hearing after she left work early one day in tears complaining that her neck was causing her pain. The tribunal has now ruled bosses at the hospital had a "grudging and negative" attitude towards the condition.


St John and St Elizabeth in London

It found that they had failed to make adjustments for Kalhor, who had also suffered discrimination and been harassed and unfairly dismissed. The clerk has been awarded £74,683 in damages.

At the hearing in central London, the tribunal was told that Kalhor had worked at the hospital as an outpatient administration clerk since 2016.

From 2018, Kalhor suffered from cervical spondylosis, a spinal condition that caused pains in her neck and back.

Four occupational health reports over the next year suggested that Kalhor should make adjustments to the way she worked, including taking regular breaks to change her posture and avoiding tilting her head when looking up at patients.

But Kalhor told the tribunal that those recommendations had "continually been ignored" by her bosses.

She resigned in 2020 and sued the hospital.

In his judgment, Mark Emery, an employment judge, concluded that the "mocking" comments directed at Kalhor were "calculated to seriously damage the relationship of trust and confidence" between the administrator and her employer.

The judge said the comments had been "made deliberately … either with the aim of damaging the relationship of trust and confidence, or at the least having utter disregard for the effect that these remarks would have on this relationship".

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Best for journalism



Alice Thomson of The Times wins interviewer of the year

Alice Thomson was recognised at the British Journalism Awards last night for her interviews with Bill Gates, Dame Deborah James and Sir Tony Blair. The judges said that Thomson "secures incredible access and lets subjects speak in their own voice while also asking the tough questions".

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'Twas the week before Christmas and ... help!
Ann Treneman
Page 30

Comment

Sunak's cure for Tory malaise? Health reform

The prime minister knows growth will come too late for the 2024 election so is pinning his hopes on another priority



Katy Balls

@KATYBALLS

Christmas quiz: what is the current ten-year gilt yield? A few weeks ago everyone in Westminster would have aced that question. The cost of borrowing was shooting up in the aftermath of Liz Truss's not-so-mini budget, with crises following. Chancellors and tax cuts were sacrificed to the gods of the markets. But people have stopped, now, seeing the exchange or borrowing rates as a daily commentary on government progress. Things have calmed and the first stage of Rishi Sunak's premiership is complete.

Sunak was selected by MPs as the market-whisperer, a financier who could assuage global markets. Such was his reputation as a fiscal hawk that British borrowing costs started to fall before the new prime minister had lifted a finger. The fact that Tory MPs then got behind the package of spending cuts and tax rises is viewed in Downing Street as his biggest achievement to date.

Since then, Sunak has sought to drain the drama from politics — or as No 10 aides put it, end the "sugar high". But some of his supporters worry he has gone too far and is betraying a lack of vision. "Steady as we go is not enough," says a former minister, looking ahead to next year. One member of government sets Sunak a deadline for progress. "We need to have something to say and to offer people hope in the next six months, otherwise there won't be enough time to even have a chance of turning things around." It's no simple task. One Tory strategist predicts that even if things go to plan the polls are unlikely to change much before summer. MPs are already talking up the May local elections as a crunch point. "Boris will be paying a lot of attention to them," says one MP mischievously.

It is easy to say the government needs a vision. It's harder to articulate one that inspires voters, shows signs of progress within 18 months and gets past a rebellious and regicidal party. Sunak sees himself as running a coalition of Tory tribes, so he won't start with his personal to-do list. He'll work out what he can get past his party and plan accordingly.

Hence the focus on small boats. The prime minister views the issue as existential for the Tories. It's the biggest reason voters give for switching to a different party and eats away at the idea of competent government. Without progress, senior figures in Tory high command fear Nigel Farage could mount a comeback that would reduce any hopes of re-election from unlikely to near impossible. One poll found one in four voters would be interested in voting for a Farage-led party.

> Senior Conservatives fear Nigel Farage could mount a comeback

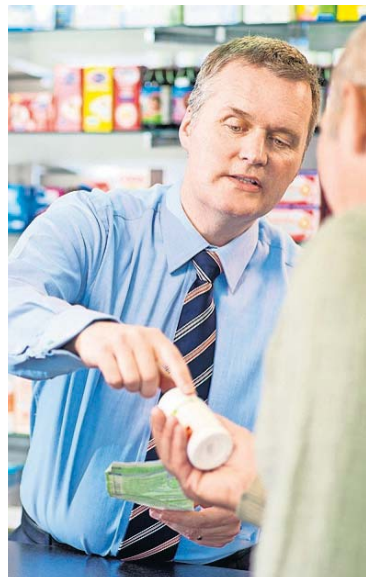
This explains this week's five-point plan on migrant boats, with the promise of legislation in the new year. Downing Street hopes that a law allowing for anyone entering the UK illegally to be removed will satisfy judges in Strasbourg, who ordered the government to delay its Rwanda deportations pending further consideration about the legalities.

Already, MPs on the right of the party are suggesting Sunak should go further and faster. This week, 69 backed the former minister Jonathan Gullis's bill to implement the Rwanda scheme by overruling the European Court of Human Rights, an institution increasingly loathed by many Tories. Sunak is not there yet: he hasn't advocated leaving the court. It would divide the Tory party, which is a strict "no" on his priority list. But if he fails to make progress, there will be pressure to put leaving the court in any Tory manifesto.

Any Tory leader would have to confront small boats. So Sunak's second priority for 2023 is more eye-catching. The prime minister is sceptical that economic growth will deliver big results for voters by the time of the next election, instead viewing public service reform as more likely to deliver quick results.

Top of the list is the health service. The NHS has more money and more staff than ever, yet is performing worse. As chancellor, Sunak surprised colleagues at one cabinet meeting by warning of the dangers of the health service's insatiable appetite for cash. His allies wondered whether the national insurance rise — to be used to clear the NHS backlog and fund social care — for which he argued to the point of resignation, would highlight to his party the political pain of pretending money was always the solution.

Now there is a team gearing up to take on the system. The chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, was the longest-serving Tory health secretary. The health secretary, Steve Barclay, is a former chief secretary to the Treasury and a veteran of funding rows with the NHS. Hunt takes the view that the health service can learn from education, where there is more freedom and less high command. In place of top-down targets, managers should be given more powers to run their hospitals as they like. Sunak believes Michael Gove's education reforms offer a blueprint for how modernisation rather than more money offers the answer. Hospital chiefs who have experimented with separating their sites into hot (acute and urgent) and cold (elective) are credited with more elective surgery than pre-Covid.



At the moment only 1,000 pharmacists in England have the power to prescribe

The prime minister is also clear that the NHS should use the private sector more. His "elective recovery taskforce" to clear the NHS backlog is modelled on the vaccine taskforce where the public and private sector worked together. The priority is to increase treatment by using independent providers. In No 10, the treatment of NHS patients in new eye clinics — ophthamology services delivered by Newmedica — is seen as a great success. The aim for the new year is to expand this to other treatment areas.

The chemist's son has also charged his team with looking at expanding prescribing powers for pharmacists. At present, only 1,000 of the 27,000 community pharmacists in England have the additional prescribing qualification required. Relaxing the rules could take pressure off GPs and make it easier for patients to secure an appointment.

> A key proposal is to increase treatment by using private providers

If Sunak could make some progress on boats and the NHS, his team believe the political landscape would largely improve. The problem for him is that, as a winter of discontent beckons, he must keep MPs on side. If they conclude there is no light at the end of the tunnel then parliamentary management will become even harder. "If MPs are convinced they will lose their seats, expect a lot of toys to be thrown out of the pram," says a former minister. Sunak needs to find a way of passing on his own private hope to his party.

Katy Balls is deputy political editor of The Spectator

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Comment

What the NHS needs is more managers

‘Fat-cat executives’ are not the problem: they’re vital to boosting the health service’s productivity

Emma Duncan



The hero of the American strip cartoon *Dilbert* is a lowly worker in a dystopian corporation whose manager, the Pointy-Haired Boss, frustrates his underlings’ efforts to get anything done. In one strip, the P-HB visits the doctor. “You’ve got a bad case of manager’s elbow,” says the doctor. “It’s caused by patting yourself on the back and covering your butt at the same time.”

Given that *Dilbert* has been running for 33 years and is syndicated in 57 countries, it is evidently mining a rich seam. Most of us are, or have been, managed by somebody, and it’s amusing and comforting to personify them as embodying the worst aspects of organisational life. That’s fine for a cartoon, but we’ve taken to talking about our public services as though they were a *Dilbert* strip.

“Frontline staff” and “bobbies on the beat” are “heroes”; “fat-cat managers” are enemies. Even people who should know better indulge in this stuff. Wes Streeting, shadow health secretary, retweeted a Mirror story claiming managers are “leeching cash from frontline medics”. He wrote: “Under the Conservatives, eye-watering sums of taxpayers’ money are paid out to managers and consultants. That means less investment in the frontline staff who our NHS relies on.”

You might hope for a more grown-up attitude from the health secretary, but Steve Barclay said recently that “too much management can be a distraction to the front line” and complained that 53,000 NHS staff were in organisations not directly involved in patient care. That seems an odd grouse. Is he against NHS Digital, which is trying to drag the health service’s ropey IT systems into the 21st century? Or would he like to redeploy its techies to bedpan duty?

Nick Bloom, a Briton who is professor of economics at Stanford University, California, and has studied management in a wide range of organisations, compares the too-many-NHS-managers trope to

> Britain spends a third as much on managing health as France does

“saying the England football team has too many coaches and not enough players. So for the next World Cup we will get rid of most of the coaching staff and make the manager a part-time job as the players are the ones kicking the ball. You can imagine what would happen — less organised players, less discipline, more injuries and less victories.”

The NHS is, probably, under rather than over-managed. Britain spends a third as much, as a percentage of its economy, on managing health as France and Germany do. And according to a report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the ratio of managers to frontline staff is declining. The IFS speculates that may be a reason for the NHS’s falling productivity, which itself is the main reason waiting lists are growing. A study into the performance of 160 British hospital trusts between 2007 and 2012 supports the idea that the NHS needs more, rather than fewer, managers. It found that a percentage point increase in the number of managers, from 2 to 3 per cent of the workforce, led on average to a 5 per cent increase in hospital efficiency and a 15 per cent reduction in infection rates.

The problem, according to John Van Reenen, a professor at the London School of Economics who has worked in the Department of Health, is “not that the quantity of management is too high but that the quality is too low”. Contrary to the Dilbertian view — and as everybody who has ever worked in an organisation knows — there are plenty of good managers and they make a big difference. According to a study by Bloom and Van Reenen, the quality of management accounts for a third of the productivity gap between Britain and America. (The gap is large, by the way, and not in our favour.)

In hospitals, poor management shows up in the kind of measures that matter most. A modest improvement in management quality in American hospitals, according to Bloom and Van Reenen, led to a 10 per cent increase in survival rates of heart attack victims.

Although it’s at odds with the British culture of amateurism, which takes the view that if one has been to a decent university one can master anything, training matters. When the government asked General Sir Gordon Messenger, a retired Royal Marines officer, to review leadership and management in the health service last year, this battle-hardened soldier was widely expected to make war on “fat-cat managers”. Instead, he bemoaned the fact that management in health and social care “lacks the status enjoyed by the established professions… [and] can therefore appear as an undervalued career, rather than one at the very heart of great care”. He blamed “inadequate, unstructured career support” and argued for more training — a prescription supported by a study which found that more MBA-trained managers in American hospitals meant lower mortality rates.

The government has put a lot of money and effort into hiring top chief executives for hospital trusts, but the crucial people seem to be mid-level managers. In a study of NHS hospitals, Raffaella Sadun, a professor at Harvard Business School, found that chief executives had little impact on hospital productivity. Sadun reckons that because hospitals are such complicated organisations, and the average chief executive stays in the job less than three years, it takes more than a charismatic boss to make a difference. The people who matter are the middle managers who, Messenger found, were being undervalued.

For politicians, the lesson is pretty obvious. If you’re more interested in improving the health service than in getting a cheap round of applause, don’t bad-mouth managers, for they are the people who enable frontline staff to do their job — or not. Invest in them and appreciate them instead.

THUNDERER

Windy Jake Berry has become the Tories’ Mick Lynch

Roland White

Take that, Rishi! An outspoken critic of the government landed two heavy blows in a single television interview yesterday. This plain-speaking firebrand not only demanded more money for striking nurses but said the deputy prime minister, Dominic Raab, should be suspended over bullying allegations.

Who was this thorn in the government’s side? The RMT leader, Mick Lynch, perhaps, or the deputy Labour leader, Angela Rayner? You might be surprised to learn it was Sir Jake Berry, Tory MP for Rossendale and Darwen, who just weeks ago was the Conservative Party chairman.

This wasn’t the first time he has given us the benefit of his hard-hitting views, although the message has changed now he has left government. During his brief stint as party chairman under Liz Truss he had some clear advice for anyone struggling with rising costs: tighten your belt, or get a better job. “People know that when their bills arrive, they can either cut their consumption or they can get

> After his own blunders, you’d think he’d be more sympathetic

a higher salary,” he said in October. The inevitable apology followed.

After that experience of the pitfalls of high office you’d think he’d be sympathetic to colleagues now in government. Far from it. When Suella Braverman was appointed home secretary, Berry noted she’d committed “multiple breaches of the ministerial code” while doing the same job for Truss. He has talked about splits appearing in the cabinet and warned that Sunak has six months to turn things round. Fast forward to the *Today* programme, next May: “Prime minister, you’ll no doubt remember Jake Berry’s warning in November. Have you turned it around yet?”

No 10 will be particularly annoyed by Berry’s criticisms because he knows what it’s like to work there. He was an adviser to Boris Johnson. Indeed, this is where he met his wife, Alice, also a Johnson aide. That didn’t stop Berry expressing his “disappointment” when Johnson cancelled a visit to address Northern Research Group MPs in Doncaster. The prime minister had decided to visit Ukraine instead.

Are his recent criticisms a form of revenge on Sunak? If you worked in No 10, you might be forgiven for thinking so. Who could blame Sunak if he followed the example of Clement Attlee, who also faced a troublesome former party chairman in Harold Laski? “A period of silence on your part,” said Attlee in his laconic way, “would be welcome.”

Roland White is a freelance writer

Ann Treneman Notebook

’Twas the week before Christmas and… help!

I am not prone to quoting Lenin but he did say: “There are decades where nothing happens and there are weeks where decades happen.” I have just had one of those weeks. But it started, as so many do at this time of year, with a panic about Christmas trees, putting up the lights and, of course, what to cook for dinner.

“Turkey?” I keep asking my daughters, wondering if this could be the year when, finally, we change the menu. My mother occasionally did a crown roast at Christmas. Or a champagne brunch. But the children, who are not children any more, of course, want a turkey and I guess I do too.

Meanwhile, we still don’t have a Christmas tree. My “tree in a pot” succumbed to the drought and I have yet to buy a new one. Should I decorate a very large twig this year instead?

Flat-out mysteries

This week I moved out of my tiny London flat, a place where hundreds of theatre reviews have been written in the dead of night. The thing that struck me, as I went through drawers and cupboards, cleaning them out, was the ridiculous nature of some of the items I’d kept.

There were dozens of mystery keys. What locks did they open? Some were so tiny they must have been to my grandparents’ suitcases or, maybe, childhood diaries. At least ten belonged to former houses — my mother’s, my children’s, mine. Why did I keep them? Endless foreign coins kept turning up. Drachmas, anyone? The final mystery: a small box that contained four adult teeth. They were, I realised, my wisdom teeth, removed decades ago. But why had I kept them?



Northern grit

My husband’s car (large) broke down on the way to London but, eventually, we managed to get there, in my Beetle, which isn’t entirely ideal for moving. The M25 sign warned of “severe weather” but, we thought, as people who live in the north do, how bad could it be this far south. The next day — moving day — we awoke to six inches of snow.

Amazingly, the movers arrived and, with plenty of salt and sweeping, not to mention tea, the van was loaded. But it was touch and go as to whether the Beetle, wheels spinning, would manage to leave the kerb. We roped in passers-by to help push and, after three attempts and a lot of true grit (so John Wayne), we left the scene.

Great care

Most chats these days start by wondering if it’s a strike day for the railways, nurses, buses, posties etc but on Tuesday, when my husband’s lingering flu became something more worrying, we decided that we had to go to A&E. “Is it a nurses’ strike day?” I asked him on the way. We had no idea but, when you’re ill, you just pray it isn’t.

It was a long night at Chesterfield Royal Hospital, spent with others in need, some with broken bones or terrible coughs, plus lots of poorly children in cute pyjamas, but we were just grateful to be seen and cared for. A complicated scan was ordered for my husband at 3am and a middle-of-the-night consultation followed, with a team organising a bed. The NHS may be creaking but, by God, it came through when it mattered. Clap for carers? Hug them close.

The inbetweeners

In a week we have moved out of the flat, fixed the car and are on the way to repairing my husband. But — and I do like some consistency — we still have no tree. So my Christmassy word of the week is *mellandagar*, which is Swedish and refers to the period between Boxing Day and new year when not a lot happens except the eating of chocolate.

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Crypto king was a crony capitalist at heart

The fall of the FTX boss is less of a told-you-so moment for the currency than a lesson about influencing the powerful

Gerard Baker



@GERARDTBAKER

Just as Britain in the 18th century felt it necessary to execute the odd admiral, modern America takes out a corporate chief executive every now and then — if not to encourage the others, then at least to educate the rest of us.

The first few decades of the current century have been marked, with steady frequency, by a succession of corporate scandals in which a large and apparently successful American company is suddenly brought down by revelations of some combination of fraud, venality, mendacity and corruption. This being a more humanitarian age, unlike the British naval chiefs, the men — and occasionally women — at the top are not shot. But they do find themselves disgraced, fired and often prosecuted and treated to a lengthy stint in a federal penitentiary.

The 21st-century roll call of corporate infamy is familiar: Enron, WorldCom, Lehman Brothers, Madoff, Theranos. These debacles served collectively as a reminder of the inevitability of human greed and severally as some wider lesson about the condition of American capitalism. Enron was a story of excessive deregulation; WorldCom a tale of the evil of unrestrained acquisitiveness; Lehman a parable of financial excess on a gargantuan scale; Bernie Madoff a model of lax supervision; Theranos a compelling yarn about the hubris of Silicon Valley and the all-dominant technology sector.

All these companies had been hailed as giants, led by executives universally acclaimed — by the media, investors, fellow capitalists — as geniuses, blazing a path for innovation and productivity across some new American frontier. It was about time for a new one and right on cue, he delivered.

Until a little over a month ago FTX was an avatar of the excitement that surrounds the rise of cryptocurrency. A trading platform where users buy and sell digital currency, the company, which had been assigned a $32 billion valuation by enthusiastic investors, was led by a 30-year-old named Sam Bankman-Fried.

SBF, as he is known, is the technology wunderkind out of central casting. The progeny of two Silicon Valley professors, he swapped coasts to study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and quickly became a leading force in the spectacular rise of the crypto business.

Sporting a shock of wild hair that makes him look like he is permanently plugged into the electric grid, and turning up to official meetings and television interviews in $30 cargo shorts, he mesmerised better turned-out investors with his evident genius and pellucid insights from the life of the uber-successful millennial, which included, for example, once telling an interviewer that reading books was a waste of time.

Such brilliance can be easily monetised in America, and SBF attracted billions in capital and customer funds as he built his digital empire. Warren Buffett famously said that financial markets are like the seaside: when the tide goes out, you can see who's been swimming naked. In SBF's case, it seems those cargo shorts had long been abandoned high up the beach.

> He donated vast sums to politicians and recruited celebrities

As the crypto bubble has deflated this year, FTX was exposed. Last month, it declared bankruptcy. On Monday, after a curious month in which SBF has been telling his "story" in media sessions with all the gusto of Harry and Meghan, he was arrested in the Bahamas, home to FTX's headquarters. He was charged by US authorities with multiple counts of fraud and faces a quick extradition.

The Securities and Exchange Commission lodged a related civil case, which was summarised by Gary Gensler, the chairman: "Sam Bankman-Fried built a house of cards on a foundation of deception while telling investors it was one of the safest buildings in crypto."

FTX, it is alleged, had been misappropriating customers' funds by passing them to SBF's related hedge fund, Alameda, which then proceeded to invest in all sorts of questionable assets, including beach houses in the Bahamas.

As with all those other corporate scandals, lessons are quickly being drawn from the FTX-SBF imbroglio. For many it's a told-you-so moment about cryptocurrency and its asset derivatives — financial instruments that the ever-colourful Jamie Dimon, chief executive of JPMorgan Chase, America's largest bank, described as "decentralised Ponzi schemes".

But this is unfair. As with the mania for any new class of asset, there has been excess in the crypto market as investors searched desperately for yield. But its underlying appeal — as a digital, borderless currency that can virtually eliminate transaction and other frictional costs and protect investors and customers from the vagaries of government and central banks — is likely to prove enduring.

The larger lesson beyond the usual message about perennial cupidity, credulity and chicanery may be about the nature of modern American capitalism. SBF may not have read any books but he knew how to read the room to get financial and commercial advantage for himself. He boasted about being a practitioner of "effective altruism", the idea that philanthropists should take a more methodical approach to improving the efficiency of their charity.

What he was really good at was winning favour and friendship with important people. He donated vast sums of money to political candidates — mostly Democrats who controlled key congressional committees. He recruited celebrities with lavish sponsorship deals. He spoke the progressive language of the modern media and cultural overlords.

This is not so much effective altruism as crony capitalism. It is a market distortion that explains why so many modern American companies enjoy a favourable regulatory environment and political climate in which they can pursue their objectives — not all of which are in the best interests of their customers.

Whatever else he was, SBF was a talented purveyor of BS. Who could ever have guessed?

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

End-of-life care

Sir, Being "at the top of my profession" does not mean Professor Sam Ahmedzai (letter, Dec 15) represents the majority view of his colleagues. Repeated surveys have shown that an overwhelming majority of UK palliative medicine doctors remain opposed or sceptical about legalising "assisted dying". They are not alone. In 2012 two thirds of Oregon hospices had policies against assisted deaths and recently New Zealand hospices were granted a supreme court ruling to refuse participation. Palliative care doctors in Canada are witnessing first-hand the damage being done to palliative care. The reality is that growth in palliative care services is slower in European "assisted dying" countries, with Dutch and Belgian growth static for nearly two decades.

Ahmedzai is right that palliative care is not helping everyone: in 2017 HospiceUK estimated that 118,000 people needed specialist palliative care but could not get access to that care. That is the true scandal that needs addressing via government investment in palliative care services.

Dr Amy Proffitt, president of the Association for Palliative Medicine Great Britain and Ireland (APM); **Dr David Brooks**, **Professor Rob George**; **Professor Bill Noble**, all APM past presidents; **Dr Claud Regnard**, honorary consultant in palliative care, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Migrant tragedy

Sir, The loss of life in the Channel on Wednesday is a tragic reminder that there remains no safe way to apply for asylum from outside the UK, more than a year after a similarly devastating incident. The majority of people crossing the Channel are from the world's crisis zones. They put their lives at risk because they feel they have no choice. Yet instead of offering them alternatives the government has chosen to prioritise the ineffective deterrence measures announced by the prime minister this week.

There will be no end to dangerous journeys unless safe journeys are made possible for those who need them. This means urgently establishing safe routes for asylum seekers, such as allowing asylum applications from outside the UK, and strengthening family reunion for those with family already here.

The government must realise that until it introduces safe routes for people to claim asylum, further deaths in the Channel may occur.

Laura Kyrke-Smith
Executive director, International Rescue Committee UK

Corrections and clarifications

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Nursing strike and threat of longer walkouts

Sir, As a nurse with more than 40 years' experience of working in the NHS I read with sadness the possibility of longer walkouts by nurses (news, Dec 15). The cost of living crisis is undoubtedly taking its toll on everyone's finances, the health service is under extreme pressure and nurses are having to dig deeper to provide high-quality care. However, striking is only going to impact negatively on patients, creating longer waiting lists. Only if we work together can we find a way through. Strike action is not a solution, it is act of frustration and a distraction from getting us back on track. I am sad and disappointed in my profession.

Sarah Baker
Tadworth, Surrey

Sir, In 1976, when I was working as a locum senior registrar at Barts, I was sent to Coventry by the other members of the doctors' mess for refusing to join the first ever strike by junior hospital doctors. It was not a pleasant experience, although there were a few others in my position so I was not entirely isolated. It strengthened my belief that it is always wrong for members of the vocational and caring professions to take strike action (reports, Dec 15) because to do so invariably causes harm to the people who rely on those carers. If that were not the case, there would be no point in taking such action.

Fifty-five years after qualifying I have recently given up my licence to practise, in part because of increasing disillusionment over the way that the medical and nursing professions are being led and managed, although the professional competence and empathy of individual doctors and nurses has probably never been higher. Having worked alongside so many wonderful nurses for the whole of my professional life, it saddens me deeply to see the strike being organised and supported by a fellow royal college to that of my own and, I am afraid to say, that it has caused me to wonder if it still deserves the first word of its name.

Wynne Weston-Davies, FRCS
Bowood, Wilts

Sir, I can assure both Peter Cave and Brian Wilkinson (letters, Dec 13 & 14) that the in-house provision of bank staff — nurses and medical secretaries alike — has been successfully implemented. I myself set up such a service in the 1990s with a loyal team of office staff. It was across all the health trusts in Oxfordshire and had its own training facility, payroll and on-call service.

Jane Ferguson
Leeds

Sir, Contrary to what Iain Martin suggests ("Streeting leads where Tories must follow", comment, Dec 15), relatively well-paid railway workers are striking precisely because they do accept that technology and changing patterns of work will probably make many of them redundant in an all-too foreseeable future. Faced with this inevitability they will, in the meantime, want to take every step lawfully available to them to maximise the earnings that they can obtain from exploiting their existing skills, knowledge and bargaining power. This may be frustrating and will almost certainly ultimately be doomed. However, it is neither irrational nor indeed in any way unethical.

Richard de Friend
London NW5

Risk for Starmer of backing Lynch

Sir, David Aaronovitch makes some interesting points about the polarisation of opinion on industrial action ("Lynch should know every question is legitimate", Dec 15). As a retired trade union member who has been involved in various disputes over the years, I broadly support the spate of strikes taking place. However, when I hear of the popularity of Mick Lynch, particularly on social media, I am reminded like Aaronovitch not only of Arthur Scargill but also of Jeremy Corbyn being serenaded at Glastonbury, as well as Ed Miliband being cajoled into meeting and being approved of by Russell Brand. Sir Keir Starmer does well to steer clear of expressing support or non-support, and should continue to keep quiet.

Trevor Hopper
Lewes , E Sussex

Raab and bullying

Sir, Kenneth Clarke recommended that every incoming Tory minister should read Gerald Kaufman's seminal book *How to be a Minister*; it would seem Dominic Raab might have failed to take this wise advice ("Calls for Raab to be suspended after five more bullying claims", Dec 15).

Kaufman, a former Labour minister and Father of the House, urged ministers to "treat your civil servants with courtesy and respect. They have great experience and skill which they can place at your disposal… it is very easy and rather unpleasant to have rows with people who in the nature of things cannot answer back… Any minister can occasionally lose his temper, and no one will mind. But systematic rudeness is remembered and resented."

Bill Jones
Honorary professor of political studies, Liverpool Hope University

Trading places

Sir, Ofsted has downgraded its ratings of many schools in its last inspection round (news, Dec 10; letters, Dec 12-15). The Care Quality Commission, its health counterpart, has rated most GP practices as good or outstanding.

The experiences of the population tell a rather different story. As a governor of a large school and a former GP I would be grateful for the two organisations to exchange their ideologies, roles and members.

Dr Stephen Bamber
Fritton, Norfolk

Merry closure!

Sir, You report that Brighton University has suggested that its staff refer to Christmas as "the winter closure period" to avoid offending students and others who are not Christian ("Merry winter closure, university wishes all", Dec 14). Our calendars are full of memorials to unpleasant pagan gods and dubious emperors that I find offensive. Could we please see moves to eradicate such names as Wednesday (derived from "day of Woden", the English equivalent to the Norse God Odin) and July (named in honour of the Roman emperor Julius Caesar) as soon as possible?

The Rev Canon J John
Director, Philo Trust

Letters to the Editor must be exclusive to The Times and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

WHY THE BEST DIARIES ARE NEVER KEPT

FROM THE TIMES DECEMBER 16, 1922

It might be pleasant, if it were only possible, to sustain the illusion prompted by the sight of the numerous diaries for the year 1923 now on sale, that we are a nation of diarists, every man a Samuel Pepys, every woman a Fanny Burney. Unfortunately it is not possible, for the plain reason that out of the thousands of diaries on the market the great majority will be filled, if they are filled at all, with prosaic entries relating to matter-of-fact business, while only a small number are destined to be the repositories of personal confidences. If we do not move among the great, if we have no opportunities of treading behind the scenes, is a diary worth keeping? Probably every one has at one time or another begun one, and has given it up after a few weeks. A simple way out of the difficulty is to let our diary be that of our ruling passion — motoring from place to place, golf, or anything else. Such a diary will give us one satisfaction; we shall be able to see from it where we were, or how we were playing, this time last year or ten years ago. That is all that can be said for it. It will never be published, and it will not be worth saving, when the time comes, from the fire.

Suppose, though, our life becomes for a while a real romance; which of us has the courage to note its earliest symptoms in a diary? Having missed the first stages, have we the heart to begin in the middle? For a few months we were living in a scene as thrilling as any novelist's; but the successive stages cannot now be recaptured, the essential dates have been forgotten, and the whole story, well worth handing down to our grandchildren, is irrecoverable. Almost to everybody, one would think, there comes a time during his life when he has material enough for a diary, just as every man is said to carry the contents of at least one good novel within him. But that is the irony; a diary cannot be improvised, for events may take us all too suddenly. If we have been plodding diarists we are ready for it; if not, the story of our past excandescence will never be readily credited. Our children will call us romancers, and so if the one act in our life's drama worth preserving does not make the impression which it ought, it will be an illustration of the truth that the best diaries never get written.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

Chatbot columnists

Sir, Hugo Rifkind teases us with the notion that anything we can learn, AI platforms can learn better ("Chatbots are coming but look on the bright side", Dec 12). This is largely true — but not for key human behaviours such as empathy. Robots may acquire notions of right and wrong, and learn to deploy them in complex situations, but they will lack the sophisticated neurobiological circuits that power human emotions. Although AI technologies might acquire moral competencies and even apply them, the intricate neurochemistry involved in moral judgment renders human morality uniquely sophisticated, and difficult (for now) to replicate in non-human mechanisms. In short: Rifkind's job as a columnist is safe, but perhaps not for long.

Professor Nayef Al-Rodhan
Neuroscientist; director, Geopolitics and Global Futures Programme, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Making a point

Sir, How right Joanna Lumley is ("Women were tough, now they are victims", Dec 14). As a student in the 1960s I wore stiletto heels when on the Tube — they were very useful to jab into some offending fellow's foot, after which one always gave a mock innocent gracious apology.

Susannah Miller
Iden, E Sussex

Hotel Brideshead

Sir, You report (Dec 14) that Evelyn Waugh wrote *Brideshead Revisited* at Piers Court in Gloucestershire. In fact he wrote it at Easton Court hotel in Chagford, Devon, while on leave from military training after a parachute fall; although he was living at Piers Court at the time he regularly used hotels to write, to avoid the distractions of home. The Devonshire tranquillity, "uniquely agreeable for both work and rest", allowed him to recover from his injury while writing his fine novel.

Alexandre Guilloteau
London W9

Meghan's musings

Sir, Hilary Rose will probably find that she is not on the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's Christmas card list this year or any future year ("Can't wait for the new Omid Scobie book on the royals? Me neither", Dec 15). However I have loved every brilliant piece of witty analysis she has made of their narcissistic shenanigans.

Anneke Berrill
London N1

Broccoli stalker

Sir, Everyone should ignore the American shopper's rejection of broccoli stalks ("Broccoli stalker stirs anger in grocery aisles", Dec 15). They are the best part of the vegetable for me and good nutrition for all.

Alastair Stevenson
Upton Bishop, Herefordshire

One out, all out

Sir, In solidarity with our ever-helpful postman we have decided that our usual Christmas card "box" to him containing a banknote, which over time has increased in denomination, will this year contain only a note saying regretfully that we are also on strike.

Pat Longuet
London NW7

Daily Universal Register

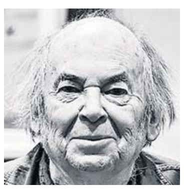
UK: Stretford and Urmston by-election results; ONS report on people in poverty at risk from cold weather; Eurostar staff strike; UK retail sales figures for November.

Nature notes



This year's woodcock moon was cancelled. The November full moon is known as the woodcock moon because it coincides with the dramatic arrival on British shores of migrant woodcock. This year however, the birds arrived a fortnight later than usual. Exceptionally hot November temperatures allowed them to linger en route from their breeding grounds in Fennoscandia. Their long, sensitive beaks were easily able to inveigle worms, beetle larvae, caterpillars and small snails from the unseasonably unfrozen ground. The cold came eventually, driving them on, but by the time that the main contingent arrived in Britain, the full moon had waned to a quarter. More than a million migrant woodcock winter with us each year. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Sir Quentin Blake, *pictured*, cartoonist and children's books illustrator, 90; **Benny Andersson**, Abba singer and composer, *Waterloo* (1974), 76; **Lord (Paul) Arthurson**, senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 58; **Tom Athron**, chief executive, Fortnum & Mason, 52; **Chris Atkin**, chairman of Engineering Council, professor of engineering and head of engineering, University of East Anglia, 58; **Christopher Biggins**, actor and TV presenter, 74; **John Cryan**, chairman, Man Group, chief executive, Deutsche Bank AG (2015-18), 62; **Jacqueline Duncan**, founder (1960) and dean, Inchbald School of Design, 91; **Baroness (Margaret) Ford**, chairwoman, NewRiver (investment trust), 65; **Geordie Greig**, editor, Daily Mail (2018-21), 62; **Baroness (Heather) Hallett**, lady justice of appeal (2005-19), 73; **Tony Hicks**, guitarist, the Hollies, *Carrie Anne* (1967), 77; **Peter Hutchinson**, professor of neurosurgery, University of Cambridge, 57; **Andrew Kötting**, film-maker, *Lek and the Dogs* (2017), 63; **Tom Newton Dunn**, presenter and executive editor, TalkTV's *First Edition* news programme, 49; **Prof Sir Martyn Poliakoff**, chemist, foreign secretary of the Royal Society (2011-16), 75; **Anna Popplewell**, actress, The Chronicles of Narnia film series, 34; **Lee Ranson**, co-chief executive, Eversheds Sutherland (international law firm), 58; **René Redzepi**, chef, four-time winner of the world's best restaurant award, 45; **Prof Adam Riess**, astrophysicist awarded the 2011 Nobel prize for providing evidence that the universe is expanding, 53; **Krysten Ritter**, actress, *Breaking Bad* (2009-10), *Jessica Jones* (2015-19), 41; **Ed Ruscha**, artist, *Large Trademark with Eight Spotlights* (1961), 85; **Rodion Shchedrin**, composer and pianist, 90; **Helen Stephenson**, chief executive, Charity Commission, 62; **Liv Ullmann**, actress, *The Emigrants* (1971), 84; **General Sir Roger Wheeler**, chief of the general staff (1997-2000), 81.

On this day

In **1830** the last hangings at Execution Dock on the Thames at Wapping took place. The two men had been charged with piracy.

The last word

"He who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander." Aristotle, Greek philosopher, in *Politics* (350BC) as translated by Benjamin Jowett.

Rank Hypocrisy

Harry and Meghan clearly see themselves as at war with the royal family. They should renounce their titles and take themselves out of the line of succession

Family breakdowns are always sad. No matter how wealthy or privileged those involved, the bitterness lingers and is wounding. It is especially hurtful when the quarrel is played out in public, with voyeuristic comments and an unseemly exposure of raw emotions. The final three instalments of the Netflix series on the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and their complaints against the royal family are indeed sad. Some people will be infuriated. Some will be sympathetic. Most will feel that this is an unnecessary and gratuitous exploitation of the couple's clearly unhappy time as prominent members of the royal family.

A point-by-point refutation of some of the misapprehensions voiced in the three episodes would be demeaning, even if an enforced silence must be infuriating to those members of the household bound by confidentiality agreements. There are obvious distortions that should not be allowed to pass. The Commonwealth is not a new and exploitative version of the British Empire: it is a voluntary association of nations that have a common link and history and indeed has attracted several new members to its number. The job of the media is not, as the Sussexes and US celebrities appear to believe, to bolster reputations with fawning coverage but to report news and events without fear or favour. And the accusation, in particular, that reports of bullying by Meghan were "planted" on The Times to undermine her is simply not true.

The duke also is misguided in accusing his brother of selfishness in looking after his "inheritance" rather than attempting to resolve the difficulties Meghan had in adapting to royal life. The Prince of Wales is next in line to the throne: he has fully understood that he has an obligation to the institution of monarchy, which remains popular and important to the people of the United Kingdom. There is an unhappy history of a king who in 1936 put personal happiness before his royal duty. William fully understands the lesson.

The King has just marked the first 100 days of his reign. He has proved to be more agile, sensitive and popular than the pessimistic forecasts when he was Prince of Wales. What is particularly unpleasant about some of the Netflix heavily edited sequences is the implication that the King and all his family are institutionally racist. Such accusations by anti-racism campaigners have been gratuitously inserted without evidence or context to bolster what seems to be an attempt by the Sussexes to portray themselves as champions of equality, human rights and racial justice. This may play well when their fading claim to fame is based solely on their experience of royal life; it can hardly be based on the unsubstantiated claims by campaigners.

Those angered by the self-indulgent whingeing of the King's younger son have called for the Sussexes to be stripped of their titles by royal attainder. This antiquated procedure is not needed. There is an obvious next step that Harry and Meghan should take. They have made clear that they consider themselves to be at war with the institution of monarchy, an institution that they appear to hold in contempt. They should therefore hand back their titles. The duke should also take himself and his family out of the line of succession.

Harry and Meghan must see the hypocrisy of claiming still to be royal. They know that their extraordinary allegations will not be countered by the monarchy, which has behaved with remarkable dignity and restraint. But their snide remarks will have upset millions of Britons who hold the monarchy, and especially the late Queen Elizabeth, in high regard. They will have damaged Britain's image in the world. Why cling to royal titles which no longer have any relevance for two people now trading simply on their image as "celebrities"? As commoners living overseas, may they find a new role that brings them happiness. Their present posture is false and risible.

Care Free

Nurses risk losing public sympathy as people start to suffer from their strikes

The first nationwide strike by the Royal College of Nursing in its 106-year history was a sombre day for the National Health Service. It was also a deeply frustrating one for those in need of NHS care. Thousands of patients had operations and appointments cancelled at the 63 hospital trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland where up to 100,000 nurses walked out. Some treatments were exempt from the strike, including chemotherapy, dialysis, neonatal and intensive care, but many cancer patients now face delays to surgery and radiotherapy. With nurses due to walk out again today and further strikes planned in the new year, the disruption will add to the pressure on a health system already struggling to clear a waiting list of 7.2 million for NHS operations.

This dispute should never have reached such a point. Much of the public will instinctively sympathise with the nurses. They provide an extraordinary public service, often in the most testing conditions and for relatively low pay. The huge outpouring of public support for NHS workers during the pandemic, when millions stood outside their homes once a week to clap for carers, was sincere and heartfelt. Many people will agree with the nurses when they say that a 5 per cent pay rise, when inflation is running at over 10 per cent and when their pay has fallen by 20 per cent in real terms over the past decade, is not enough.

Nonetheless, by going on strike and bringing the work of large parts of the NHS to a halt, the nurses risk forfeiting this public sympathy. As the walkouts continue, and more people are left in pain or risk seeing their conditions worsen as they await vital surgery, patience with the strikers is likely to wear thin. Inevitably some people will suffer and even die as a result of treatment withheld because of the strikes. What's more, even those who believe nurses should be paid more than they are currently being offered will balk at the RCN's demand for a pay rise of 17 per cent, 5 per cent above inflation. That is neither reasonable nor affordable.

Indeed, the Bank of England's decision yesterday to raise interest rates by a further 0.5 percentage points to 3.5 per cent is a reminder that the whole country is feeling the effects of the inflation crisis. The primary cause of that inflation shock is Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which, by driving up energy costs, has made everyone poorer. There is nothing the government or the Bank can do to change this reality. But they can and must get inflation under control. After all, it is those on the lowest incomes who suffer most from rising prices and the cost of living crisis. That includes many nurses. Indeed, the single most important action the government can take to improve nurses' standard of living is to bring inflation back to target.

That is why the government is right to hold firm in the face of the industrial unrest spreading across the public sector. While it is true that higher pay for nurses will not directly contribute to a wage-price spiral, ministers are right to worry that conceding to demands by one union will only embolden others and that rising public sector pay will in turn fuel higher pay demands in the private sector . The reality is that ministers have accepted the recommendations of the independent pay review body on nurses' pay, albeit one that was concluded before inflation increased. Reopening that review now might solve a short-term problem but at the risk of creating greater difficulties in the future. Meanwhile, the NHS sinks deeper into crisis.

Pizza the Action

Italy's famous beach clubs face EU pressure to allow foreign investors

A large chunk of Italy's long and spectacular coastline is dominated by independent clubs, often family run, paying peppercorn rents and serving traditional regional dishes. The European Union wants to open up the sector by permitting foreign companies to scoff a lucrative slice of the market. Giorgia Meloni's nationalist government is opposed to this deregulation.

"The idea makes me feel ill," claims Daniela Santanchè, the tourism minister, doing nothing to challenge the stereotype of a nation prone to get melodramatic about food. She says she is anxious over the fate of traditional dishes "that make up part of our identity". Not since the River Café was declared the best Italian restaurant in Europe have passions over la cucina run so high.

Should concessions be made to the dreaded international cuisine? Not to mention free trade? Or should parmigiana di melanzane be defended to the last layer from outrageous Brussels interference? The row is shaping up as a major crossroads in determining the character of modern Italy. A spaghetti junction, if you will.

The protectionists should calm down. Ever since Italians started emigrating in large numbers at the end of the 19th century, the world has been in love with the recipes they brought with them, even if those recipes have sometimes been modified beyond anything *nonna* might recognise. Given the popularity of the classic dishes, both high end and high street, the likes of linguini allo scoglio can withstand a new challenge.

It is true that tastes in the UK these days run more towards chicken tikka masala and, yes, spaghetti bolognese (which purists say we Brits still fail to get right) than they do fish and chips or shepherd's pie. And yet surely traditional Italian cooking, incomparable as it is, has nothing to fear from the arrival of a few burgers and barbecues?

World

Spies cracked EU bribery case with covert break-in

Belgium
Bruno Waterfield Brussels

Belgian spies uncovered the corruption and bribery scandal that has rocked the EU after they broke into the key suspect's home in the summer.

Details of the operation run by the secret service were being revealed yesterday at a meeting of EU leaders in Brussels. They were expected to demand answers about huge bribes allegedly paid to MEPs.

In a breakthrough for investigators, Francesco Giorgi, the husband of Eva Kaili, a vice-president of the European parliament, is thought to have confessed to his role in a bribery network claimed to have been set up by Moroccan intelligence, as well as to working for Qatar's government.

Kaili and Giorgi were arrested a week ago on suspicion of corruption. More than €900,000 was found at their home and in a hotel room used by her father, Alezandros Kailis.

According to Le Soir, Giorgi, 35, has told prosecutors that it was his job to manage cash payments to MEPs, naming two European deputies, an Italian and Belgian, who he claims took bribes.

The money was allegedly to be used to extend Qatar's influence before the EU took decisions on visa liberalisation and an aviation deal last year. Kaili, 44, has previously denied that the money was intended for bribes but insisted that the EU's relationship with Qatar was growing closer because Europe was trying to move away from dependency on Russian energy and wanted to seek gas or oil supplies from Gulf states.

The police seized more than €1.5 million last weekend, and €600,000 was also seized in the house of Antonio Panzeri, 67, a former Italian centre-left MEP and president of an influential non-governmental organisation. Panzeri, his wife and daughter are alleged to have benefited from money sent by a Moroccan diplomat. Panzeri is accused of passing on cash to MEPs. His wife and daughter have been extradited to Belgium from Italy but the family have denied any wrongdoing. The diplomat has yet to comment.



Eva Kaili and her husband have both been arrested

The investigation started with the Belgian intelligence agency looking for evidence of "foreign interference" in EU decision-making.

Agents broke into Panzeri's home in July, using "special intelligence methods", and found €700,000 in cash.

The money was left in place and all traces of a break-in were removed. A dossier was passed to Michel Claise, a Brussels investigating judge, and the Central Anti-Corruption Service.

Vincent Van Quickenborne, Belgium's justice minister, said: "It was a game-changer that state security has been working on for more than a year, together with foreign intelligence services, to map suspected bribery of MEPs by various countries."

The operation also involved secret services in five other countries, thought to include Greece and Italy. Although the secret services are not allowed to investigate political parties or elected officials, such as MEPs, they can begin operations if foreign agencies are suspected of working in Belgium.

The investigation began after it was suspected that Morocco's foreign intelligence service, the Directorate General of Studies and Documentation, was running networks to influence European politicians.

The figures under suspicion emerged as being Panzeri, who is president of Fight Impunity, a human rights organisation, and the Moroccan diplomat, who it is claimed acted as a spymaster.

Yesterday MEPs voted to strip Kaili of her office as vice-president of the parliament before judicial hearings on the charges against her.

Giorgi's allegation that he ran a payments operation for Panzeri is a potential breakthrough and may explain why his wife did not appear at a remand hearing yesterday, which her lawyers applied to postpone until next week.

Giorgi was parliamentary aide to Andrea Cozzolino, an Italian MEP, and has accused him and Marc Tarabella, a Belgian deputy, of taking payments. Tarabella's house was searched at the weekend by the police. Both MEPs deny wrongdoing.

Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, arrived at the Brussels summit yesterday urging the EU to put its house in order to avoid the scandal damaging it.

"What is important now is the reaction, which must be serious and decisive, and on which depends the credibility of the union," she said. "Italy will ask for full light to be shed on what is happening."

President Macron defended his trip to Qatar to watch France's semi-final win over Morocco on Wednesday, and said the EU needed to wait until the "full facts" of the investigation emerged.

Roberta Metsola, the European parliament president, admitted there was a problem with "foreign actors that seek to undermine us".

She said: "My message will be that there will be no impunity, there will be no sweeping under the carpet, there will be no business as usual. There are too many ways that decisions are taken that could be done better. Too many informal groupings that are potentially more amenable to influence. Too many organisations whose transparency of funding is not clear."

Behind the story

A rare sighting was offered to the subjects of King Mohammed VI of Morocco last week when he appeared among revelling fans in the streets of Rabat after his country's surprise World Cup round of 16 victory over Spain (Isambard Wilkinson writes).

The bribery scandal rocking the EU gives a similarly rare glimpse behind the walls of Morocco's royal palaces, from where the king, court and security forces — collectively the *makhzen* — hold sway. Francesco Giorgi, husband of the European parliament's vice-president, Eva Kaili, has confessed to his role in a bribery network set up by Moroccan intelligence, and to working for Qatar. The Belgian investigation began with longstanding concerns over Morocco's foreign intelligence service, the DGED, running networks in Europe. It includes allegations of payments by Morocco, whose government has not responded to requests for comment.

Western intelligence services are no strangers to its capabilities. Indeed, they have often turned to Morocco for help to combat Islamist terrorism, most notably after the Madrid bombings of 2004 and the Paris attacks of 2015. The idea that Morocco uses its security services to press its interests in the EU would not raise many diplomatic eyebrows.

Rabat has used migration to Europe as a bartering tool to extract funds from EU coffers and has grown in confidence since it persuaded the Trump government to recognise its claim to the territory of Western Sahara in return for it normalising relations with Israel. Morocco angered Saudi Arabia by refusing to join its blockade on Qatar in 2017, in effect siding with Qatar while claiming it was neutral in the crisis.

On ascending to the throne in 1999, Mohammed framed himself as a reformer, but since the Arab Spring the *makhzen* has tightened its grip.



Setting the world on fire **Salomé Ramírez**

Blow for Musk after court rules against Twitter

Germany
Oliver Moody

Twitter has lost a pivotal lawsuit after a court ruled that the company had a duty to track down and delete offensive posts even if a victim did not report them individually.

The case sharpens Germany's already stringent social media regulations and could hamper Elon Musk's ambition to turn Twitter into a hub of free speech.

The challenge was brought by Michael Blume, an official leading the government's campaign against antisemitism in the southwest German state of Baden-Württemberg. Blume's Twitter account was showered with abuse from users who falsely accused him of cheating on his wife with underage girls, sympathising with paedophiles and being a closeted antisemite.

Under a 2017 law known as NetzDG — Network Enforcement Act — social media platforms are obliged to take down illegal or defamatory content within 24 hours of receiving a complaint or face a fine of up to €5 million.

Blume reported 50 of the tweets but they were still available to be viewed more than a week later and were removed only when the main account behind the campaign was suspended.

The case was taken up by Chan-jo Jun, an activist lawyer known for tackling online hate speech. The judges at Frankfurt regional court broadly sided with Blume and Jun. Contrary to initial speculation, they did not order Twitter to suspend its operations in Germany.

They ruled that the platform was obliged not only to delete such tweets promptly but also to seek out and eliminate any further posts that repeated the same allegations.

Jun said this was the first such verdict from a German court against Twitter, although there had been a similar ruling against Facebook in 2019. It is unclear whether Twitter will appeal.

German law does not recognise precedents in the British sense of the term. In practice, other judges are likely to adopt a similar approach because of the longstanding principles that judgments should be applied consistently and that citizens should be regarded as equal in the eyes of the law.

● A former Twitter employee convicted of spying for Saudia Arabia while at the company has been sentenced to three and a half years in prison, according to US officials. Ahmad Abouammo, 45, was found guilty of selling the user information of Saudi dissidents for $100,000 cash and a $40,000 watch. "The defendant sold his position to an insider of the Crown Prince," Colin Sampson, the US crown prosecutor, said.

Boss wanted back at Tesla, page 49

Gaffe shows a president past his peak, say critics

Uganda
Jane Flanagan

Its pristine glaciers, waterfalls and lakes prompted Winston Churchill to call Uganda "the pearl of Africa". European tourists continue to recommend it as "Switzerland with gorillas".

President Museveni had the perfect opportunity to boast of his country's

Wildlife flees after climate and water thieves ravage Spanish national park
Page 37



Costume drama as critics take aim at raunchy new Bollywood film
Page 38

ISAAC FONTANA/EPA



in Authentic Flamenco, the Teatro Real show which began in Madrid and has reached Brazil after touring the US and India

breathtaking scenery on social media during official visits to London and Washington this week. "I have continued to highlight the unique beauty of Uganda," Museveni, 78, tweeted alongside a scene of snow-capped mountains and a lake that he presented as "the marvel" of the Rwenzori mountains.

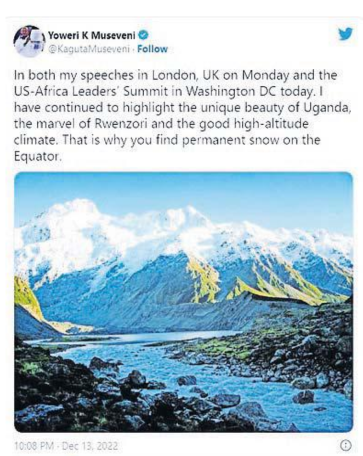
The range, which crosses the border into Congo, is one of Uganda's natural jewels and home to dozens of species of plants and animals not found anywhere else in the world, including a red duiker and dark Rwenzori leopard. Yet, Museveni's chosen chocolate box shot for social media was actually taken 8,700 miles away and was of Mount Sefton, a 10,337ft peak in New Zealand.

Critics of the president, who has been in power since 1986 thanks to two constitutional amendments, leapt on the error as fresh evidence of him being either being too old to govern or his dishonesty. There were accusations of fraud during elections last year, which gave Museveni his sixth term in office.

More sympathetic observers pointed to an error made earlier when an image from New Zealand was uploaded to Google and wrongly geolocated as the range in Uganda.

After visiting London, Museveni joined dozens of African leaders for a meeting hosted by the White House, which was aimed at rebooting America's relations with the continent.

Although the isolated volcanoes of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya are taller, the Rwenzori mountains are Africa's highest range. Mount Stanley is 16,763ft. Its shroud of mist parts only rarely, to reveal dazzling equatorial glaciers — but not those praised by Museveni in his tweet.


Yoweri K Museveni @KagutaMuseveni · Follow

In both my speeches in London, UK on Monday and the US-Africa Leaders' Summit in Washington DC today, I have continued to highlight the unique beauty of Uganda, the marvel of Rwenzori and the good high-altitude climate. That is why you find permanent snow on the Equator.

10:08 PM · Dec 13, 2022

President Museveni praised Uganda's beauty with a picture of New Zealand

Putin's absence fuels rumours of Noah's Ark plot

Russia
Marc Bennetts

With his war in Ukraine turning into a disaster for Russia, President Putin is doing his best to keep out of the public eye, fuelling rumours about his health and state of mind and reports that he could be planning to flee to South America.

Yesterday the Kremlin announced that Putin would not take to the ice in Red Square for his traditional ice-hockey match with a select group of allies and bodyguards.

Over the past few days, Putin's annual press conference has been cancelled, as has his yearly "conversation with the people" — a Q&A session that can last for more than four hours. Both events, which are broadcast live by state television, are vital elements of the Kremlin's portrayal of Putin as an all-powerful, father-of-the-nation figure.

More significantly, Putin appears to be planning to skip his annual state of the nation address to the lower and upper houses of parliament. The president is obliged to report in person to parliament once a year, according to the constitution, which was rewritten two years ago by the Kremlin to allow Putin to stay in power until 2036, when he will be 83.

However, with time running out, the Kremlin says it is possible that the event could be postponed until next year. Dmitry Peskov, Putin's spokesman, has not explained the reasons behind the cancellations.

"This all looks somewhat suspicious," Yekaterina Schulmann, a Russian political scientist, said. "[These events] are all necessary for a sense of stability. People are already in a desperate state of mind."

Putin's advisers are believed to have been concerned that he would face awkward questions about the war at the Q&A. A failure to give his address before the end of the month would be a sign, Schulmann said, that "the wheels aren't going round like they ought to". And a failure to appear on New Year's Eve, when the president traditionally greets his people in a televised speech, would be unthinkable, she added.

Putin, 70, has been visited by a cancer specialist 35 times in four years, according to a report by The Project, an opposition website that has been banned by the Kremlin. It said in April that Putin was treated by several doctors, including an oncology surgeon who specialised in thyroid cancer.

In July, Putin was seen hobbling from a plane during a visit to Iran and appeared to be avoiding putting weight on his right leg. The average life expectancy for a man in Russia is 66, according to state statistics. However, unlike most Russians, Putin has access to the highest quality healthcare.

The failures of the Russian army in Ukraine have prompted the Kremlin to start preparing safe havens for Putin in case Russia suffers a humiliating defeat and is forced to flee the country, his former speechwriter has said.

Abbas Gallyamov, a political analyst, cited a Kremlin source who said that Putin would escape to Argentina or Venezuela if there was a serious threat that he could be toppled. The plan is believed to be codenamed "Noah's Ark".

"[Putin's] entourage has not ruled out that he will lose the war, be stripped of power, and have to urgently evacuate somewhere," he wrote on Telegram.

Igor Sechin, the head of Rosneft, a state oil company, is said to be overseeing the arrangements for a possible escape to Venezuela. He is one of Putin's closest allies and is thought to have a close relationship with President Maduro. Little is known of the alleged plan to evacuate Putin to Argentina, if his regime collapses.

Putin's inner circle had initially considered China as a refuge but decided against it because Beijing despises "losers", Gallyamov wrote.

Mark Galeotti, a British expert on the Kremlin, questioned how Gallyamov, who lives in Israel, would have been able to gain access to top secret information. "[But] these things do happen. Stuff does leak," he said on his *In Moscow's Shadows* podcast.

Pro-Kremlin media have suggested that Putin is too busy with the war to answer questions from journalists or the public. He was last seen in public last Friday in Kyrgyzstan. Holding a glass of champagne and appearing tipsy, he confused Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine, with Crimea.

● The US has sanctioned Vladimir Potanin, an oligarch worth $25.4 billion. He owns the world's largest producer of palladium and nickel. His yacht, Nirvana, worth $300 million, was designated for seizure.

Drones strike Russian base

Explosions have been heard at a military airfield in Russia after the Kremlin targeted Kyiv with Iranian-made drones. Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to the Ukrainian interior minister, said "an unknown drone" had hit targets at a Russian airbase in Kursk, 60 miles from the border with Ukraine. Kyiv does not directly acknowledge attacks on Russian territory.

Russian officials said the drones had been shot down by air defences and that there were no casualties.

Ukraine also said it had destroyed 13 Iranian drones over Kyiv and the surrounding area.

In the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, Russian-installed officials said Ukrainian shelling had killed one civilian and injured at least nine in Donetsk. Alexei Kulemzin, the city's pro-Moscow mayor, said the attack was the "most massive" by Ukrainian forces since Donetsk was seized by Kremlin-backed gunmen in 2014.

The Kremlin said yesterday that there was no prospect of a Christmas ceasefire.

World

Peru protests leave Britons stranded at Machu Picchu

Peru
Stephen Gibbs Caracas

Hundreds of foreign tourists are stranded in the Machu Picchu region of Peru after roads were blocked and a train service suspended during violent protests against the overthrowing and arrest of President Castillo.

Officials said that nearly 800 tourists of various nationalities had been unable to leave the area since Tuesday.

"Someone needs to negotiate and get in touch with the army and get us out," Mark Goodwin, 59, from Sutton Coldfield told The Times. He is stuck in Ollantaytambo, a village in the heart of Peru's "sacred valley" and the gateway to Machu Picchu, a 15th-century Inca citadel high in the Andes.

Goodwin, who was on what he had hoped would be a "dream holiday" with his wife Joanna, said his efforts to seek assistance from the British embassy in Lima had come to nothing. "They've virtually washed their hands of us," he said.

Samantha Davis, 35, from London, has been travelling in South America for seven months. She said that she was stuck in the southern city of Arequipa, where protesters have blockaded the airport. Yesterday morning she saw a mobile phone shop beside her hostel being looted and clashes between people on the streets and riot police.

"I've been here during other protests and I've successfully avoided roadblocks before, but this is pretty unique," she said. "They've never stormed an airport before, people are really angry."

On Wednesday, the new government declared a state of emergency. It has been in power for a week, after Castillo, a leftist, was impeached and then arrested when he tried to dismiss parliament and rule by decree.

The new president, Dina Boluarte, 60, who had been Castillo's vice-president, imposed the measure in an effort to restore order after days of violent protests, which were beginning to paralyse the country. "The national police with the support of the armed forces will ensure the control throughout the national territory of personal property and, above all, strategic infrastructure and the safety and well-being of all Peruvians," Luis Otarola, the defence minister, said.

The declaration, akin to martial law, includes suspension of the rights of "personal security and freedom", including rights of assembly and freedom of movement. The authorities will be able to search people's homes without permission or judicial order.

Emergency measures have not been imposed on such a scale since the 1990s, when the country was battling the Shining Path, a Marxist terrorist group.

"Peru cannot overflow with blood," said Boluarte. "We have already gone through that experience in the 1980s and '90s, and we do not want to return to that painful story that has marked the lives of thousands of Peruvians."

The pro-Castillo protesters have been demanding immediate elections and his release from jail. They insist that the Boluarte government is illegitimate and should not be recognised. At least seven people have died and more than 100 police officers have been injured during the unrest, according to the authorities.

"It was like rent-a-mob turned up on Tuesday," said Goodwin. "They came in from the nearby villages to make this protest … and then yesterday [Wednesday] there was absolutely nothing."

The only train service connecting Machu Picchu with Cusco, its closest city, 70 miles away, was suspended after indigenous and agrarian organisations called for an indefinite strike as part of protests that began Monday.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We are providing consular assistance to British nationals in Peru." The British government advised any stranded Britons to contact the Peruvian authorities via a registration form set up for the purpose.

JAVIER GARCIA/SHUTTERSTOCK; YVES HERMAN/REUTERS



Vive la France **President Macron celebrates while watching his country's World Cup semi-final win in Qatar before jetting to the EU leaders' summit in Brussels, where he had a spring in his step**

Hong Kong judge quashes protester's conviction

Hong Kong
Didi Tang Beijing

A High Court judge in Hong Kong has quashed the conviction of a prominent pro-democracy activist after ruling that the city's pro-Chinese authorities failed to justify banning a candlelit vigil commemorating the Tiananmen Square massacre.

In a rare victory for Hong Kong's protest movement, the judge ruled that police acted unlawfully in arresting Chow Hang-tung, a barrister, after she urged residents to turn out or light a candle on the anniversary of the event last year.

Chow's conviction and 15-month prison sentence for "inciting" an illegal assembly was overturned, but she will remain in custody because the Hong Kong government is likely to appeal, and she is facing two other charges under the sweeping national security law imposed by Beijing.

Hong Kong was previously the only part of China where tributes to the 1989 Tiananmen protest movement were allowed, but the city's authorities had cited the Covid pandemic to ban a traditional anniversary vigil in the city's Victoria Park since 2020.

After appearing in court to appeal against her conviction, Chow, 37, was surprised by the ruling. "I didn't expect that," she said, according to Ming Pao, a local newspaper.

A leading member of the now-defunct Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Democratic Movements of China, which organised the vigil, the Cambridge-educated barrister was arrested in June last year for media articles in which she encouraged others to resume the event or stage personal commemorations.

The judge, Judianna Barnes, argued that the police failed to discharge their duty and consider other measures to facilitate an assembly, such as restricting the duration or the numbers attending, or requiring participants to observe health measures.

Chow was convicted of illegal assembly for participating in the vigil on the night of June 4, 2020, and was sentenced to 12 months on that charge. She also faces charges related to the operations of the alliance, which was forced to disband last year as Hong Kong imposed the national security law at the behest of the Chinese government.

See no evil at after-school Satan club

United States
Will Pavia New York

The flyer went out in the run-up to Christmas, announcing a new club that would meet on one afternoon each month at a primary school in Virginia.

"Hey kids!" it said. "Let's have fun at After School Satan Club." On one side of the flyer, above a photograph of some colouring pencils, was an image of a smiling Beelzebub, dressed smartly in a blazer and a bow tie with a scholar's cap nestled between his great red horns.

June Everett, a minister at The Satanic Temple, said her organisation had established four other After School Satan Clubs elsewhere and had been contacted by "some very eager parents" who wanted to have one at to BM Williams Primary School in Chesapeake.

A nice lady named Rose had offered to run the club along with two other volunteers, she said.

As the flyer said, children would not take part in occult rituals or animal sacrifices. The club championed science and reason, it said. "The Satanic Temple is a non-theistic religion that views Satan as a literary figure who represents a metaphorical construct of rejecting tyranny and championing the human mind and spirit."

Nevertheless, at a meeting of the Chesapeake School Board this week, one father said the club should not be allowed to meet. "If it means we got to go to court and fight, then we go to court," he said.

In an interview in 2013 Doug Mesner, a co-founder of The Satanic Temple, explained that it was founded in response to religious groups who had been "successful in imposing themselves upon public affairs."

It applied for permission for an after-school club at BM Williams Primary School after a Christian group did the same. In a statement the Child Evangelism Fellowship accused The Satanic Temple of setting "a trap", provoking school boards to withdraw approval for all religious groups holding clubs at the school.



A flyer for the club said there would be no rituals or animal sacrifices

First lady 'all in' on bid for second Biden term

Alistair Dawber Washington

Jill Biden is "all in" behind her husband running for a second presidential term despite claims that she was lukewarm about the idea.

The president's wife, 71, an effective and popular campaigner, lost her voice during a hectic schedule that included 39 appearances at rallies before the midterm elections last month.

President Biden, 80, was galvanised by the results — the best for a party in the White House for 20 years — and says that the family will make the final decision. A formal announcement is expected in the spring.

In 2004 and 2015, Jill Biden acted as a brake on her husband's ambitions to run for president and even though she is said to be "exhausted" by the busy White House schedule, a report on CNN said she would support the idea of a second term. "She'll be at the White House for Christmas. They will be joined by members of their families," Vanessa Valdivia, her press secretary, told CNN. She declined to comment on the family discussions.

The White House is planning for the 2024 election and for aides close to the president, and Kamala Harris, the vice president, the assumption is that the two will be on the ticket.

Democrat voters are not convinced. A CNN poll showed 59 per cent of the party's voters and supporters would prefer a new candidate.

Sea dogs survive ordeal on bean water

United States

Will Pavia New York

Two men and a dog who were lost at sea for ten days when their yacht was crippled by a storm have been rescued after the crew of an oil tanker spotted them adrift in the Atlantic.

Joe DiTomasso, 76, and Kevin Hyde, 65, from Cape May, New Jersey, set sail on November 27, accompanied by a miniature poodle named Minnie, on a voyage to the winter sun of Florida.

Instead they found themselves in 40ft waves, with a broken mast, no power or fuel, dwindling supplies of water and no way of raising the alarm.

They had reached North Carolina without incident and set off again on December 3. "It was hunky dory," said Hyde, at a press conference. "We were sailing along having a good time."

As night fell the Atrevida II reached Cape Hatteras, but just as they were preparing to turn south "a storm blew up and blew us off course and I lost part of my mast, so I didn't have power to make the turn," Hyde said.

DiTomasso said that the mast was 50ft high and the "sails on that broke, came down. Kevin ran out and cut the lines to get it off the boat because it was hanging over the side." The waves "were mountains", he said. "I never heard a wind so bad in my whole life. It seemed like the devil was out there."

Once they had cut off the mast, the boat seemed a match for the seas. "It has a lead keel and the boat rode so good," DiTomasso said. "That boat could take it but we couldn't." In the morning they had no fuel and no way to power radios and navigation gear so were not sure where they were.

Back in New Jersey, DiTomasso's family became alarmed as days went by. "My dad is really bad with his phone and charger," his daughter, Nina, told The New York Times. "Then we got worried because people couldn't reach Kevin either." On Sunday the US Coast Guard began a search, contacting all shipping and launching boats and four aircraft to scan 2,100 miles of ocean from Massachusetts to Miami.

By then the situation on the Atrevida II was desperate. "We had no water left, nothing," DiTomasso said. They had taken with them cans of beans, which contained water, and they took turns to take sips from the cans.



Kevin Hyde, Joe DiTomasso and their poodle were lost at sea for ten days

He praised the conduct of the dog, Minnie, during this thirsty time. "The dog was unbelievable," he said, although they had to stop her drinking everything in sight.

On Tuesday a sailor on the oil tanker Silver Muna saw a boat with two men waving frantically. "We were out of the shipping lane, almost," Hyde said. "So it was probably the last ship that would have been able to find us." Neeraj Chaudhary, the tanker's captain, called it a miracle. "God sent the Silver Muna to save them," he said. "Because we didn't receive any distress signal."

When the vessel reached New York, the two men and their dog were greeted by the coast guard and fire department. Asked if they would try another such voyage, DiTomasso said: "No." Hyde, however, shrugged and said: "Sure. I mean, I'm not dead yet."

Italy fights on the beaches to save clams and spaghetti

Italy

Tom Kington Rome

Italy's tourism minister says that spaghetti with clams and other dishes "that form part of our identity" will be taken off the menu if foreigners are allowed to run the country's lucrative beach clubs, cafés and restaurants.

Daniela Santanchè, 61, challenged pressure from the EU to open up to competition thousands of establishments that charge holidaymakers to sit on Italy's beaches. Often family-run, the clubs have walled off half the beaches and pay €83 million in licence fees a year yet turn over €10 billion.

Mario Draghi, who was prime minister, planned tenders by 2024 to open up the sector to competition, but Giorgia Meloni's nationalist government says that predatory foreign investors are poised to snap up the concessions.

"Handing them over to multinationals would take away their unique characteristics, such as a certain type of food, a certain type of welcome," said Santanchè . "The idea makes me feel ill. Just think that we would could no longer be able to eat our spaghetti with clams or our parmigiana di melanzane, things that make up part of our identity." Parmigiana di melanzane — a dish with aubergines — and spaghetti with clams both feature on beach club menus.

Santanchè was accused of having a conflict of interest because before entering government she was part owner of Twiga, a luxury beach club at Forte dei Marmi.

Italy's beach clubs are under pressure, leading article, page 33

ALAMY



Donana national park in Andalusia is normally home to protected species such as the Iberian lynx

Droughts suck life from prized wetland

The recent rain in Spain has drawn flamingos back to the country's most famed national park but ecologists have warned that it may not be enough to save the wetland (Isambard Wilkinson writes).

Years of agricultural overexploitation combined with drought led the largest permanent lake in Donana national park, one of Europe's biggest and most important wetlands, to dry up this summer.

Sitting on an estuary in Andalusia where the Guadalquivir river meets the Atlantic, the wetlands cover 74,000 hectares (182,000 acres). The emptying of the Santa Olalla lagoon left the rest of the wetlands dry.

A wintering site for half a million waterfowl and a stopover spot for millions of other birds that migrate from Africa to northern Europe, its flamingos suddenly took flight in search of other sources of water. Protected species such as the Iberian lynx, the imperial eagle and the spur-thighed tortoise also suffered from the water shortage.

The event sparked alarm in Spain. The government pledged this month to invest €350 million in the Unesco world heritage site, which ecologists say is dying due to climate change and the misuse of water.

The plan includes enforcing the closure of illegal wells that irrigate strawberry crops by increasing the number of environmental agents who punish farmers who steal water.

Juan Carlos del Olmo, head of the World Wildlife Fund in Spain, welcomed it as a positive step but warned that Donana was "in the most dangerous moment in its history".

Don Quixote's 1615 edition canters to auction jackpot

France

Charles Bremner Paris

An exceptionally rare edition of *Don Quixote* has fetched €504,000 (£439,000) at auction in Paris nearly nine decades after a London bookshop sold it to a Bolivian diplomat for £850.

The two volumes of Miguel de Cervantes's masterpiece, described by Sotheby's Paris as "the rarest and best example to have reached the market in decades", consist of a third edition of the first volume, printed in 1615, three years after the first, and a first edition of the second part, printed in 1615. The 1615 edition was the only one corrected by Cervantes and is deemed to be the definitive version.

The identity of the buyer was not disclosed.

The two volumes were sold to Jorge Ortiz Linares, a bibliophile and diplomat, in 1936 by Maggs Bros, the antiquarian booksellers in Bloomsbury, after he flew in from his Paris base when they telephoned to tell him they had acquired the work. Ortiz Linares, who became Bolivian ambassador to Paris in 1947, was the son-in-law of Simón Patiño, a Bolivian tin magnate nicknamed the Rockefeller of the Andes and one of the world's richest men of the time.



The sale of the Cervantes volumes was a "once in a lifetime" occasion

Anne Heilbronn, head of books and manuscripts at Sotheby's France, said the availability of a pair of such early editions with an established provenance from more than three centuries previously "is one that, for most collectors, appears only once in a lifetime".

Jean-Baptiste de Proyart, an expert in ancient books who advised Sotheby's, said: "These texts belong to what Goethe called in 1827 the Weltliteratur, that is, works that everyone knows, that everyone lives, that everyone has heard of."

The early editions of Cervantes were among 87 volumes from the Ortiz Linares library that were auctioned by Sotheby's.

Also among them was the first pirated edition of *Don Quixote*, printed in 1605 in Lisbon by Jorge Rodríguez. It sold for €56,700.

Bollywood bust-up over steamy song



YASH RAJ FILMS

Deepika Padukone dances sexily in various colours but saffron, a shade linked to saints, has provoked outrage

Bollywood films are known for suggestive dance sequences but a bright dress in a movie has led a Hindu minister to bristle over its "highly objectionable" moves and "dirty mentality" (Amrit Dhillon writes).

Narottam Mishra, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) minister in Madhya Pradesh has worked himself up over a song from the film *Pathaan*.

In the accompanying music video the actress Deepika Padukone, 36, gyrates provocatively in sexy beachwear and sings: "The moment I feel a wave of modesty, I throw it to the wind … the world hasn't seen my true colours."

However, it is one colour in particular — a saffron dress — that has offended Mishra. Saffron is the colour more traditionally worn by Hindu saints and ascetics.

"The costumes in the song at first glance are objectionable. It is clearly visible that the song of the film *Pathaan* has been shot with a dirty mindset," Mishra told reporters.

The action film is due out next month and the music video was used to promote it.

Rightwing Hindu activists in Indore burnt effigies of the stars and demanded a ban on the basis of Mishra's objections. A complaint has been filed against the actors for "offending" religious sentiments, which will now be considered by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. On social media, #BoycottPathan is trending.

Mishra has previously objected to other Indian films on religious grounds and last year he banned the comedian Vir Das, who mocks the brand of Hindu extremism associated with the BJP, from performing. However, with the prime minister Narendra Modi's party now in power in 13 states and with a handsome majority, extreme groups have become emboldened about policing popular culture.

Others did not like the film either. Vivek Agnihotri, a director, said that the video appeared to be inspired by Instagram, but it was then pointed out that scantily clad women featured in promos for his own films.

Young Irish peacekeeper dies in attack by villagers

Lebanon
Richard Spencer
Middle East Correspondent

An Irish soldier serving as a UN peacekeeper in southern Lebanon has been killed after the armoured vehicle in which he was travelling with colleagues came under fire from villagers.

Three other soldiers were injured in the incident late on Wednesday in the village of Aaqbiyeh, south of the city of Sidon and north of the buffer zone along the border with Israel that the peacekeeping force, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil), has monitored for decades.

The dead soldier, Private Sean Rooney, 23, from Newtowncunningham, Co Donegal, was in one of two armoured vehicles that were said by Unifil to be travelling to Beirut when they came under small arms attack.

Reports from the area suggested that a family in the village opened fire when one of vehicles crashed into their shop. The vehicle overturned, according to video posted quickly from the scene before police arrived. "A convoy of two armoured utility vehicles carrying eight personnel travelling to Beirut came under small arms fire," the Irish army said.

"Four personnel were taken to Raee Hospital, near Sidon, as a result of the incident. One soldier was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital and another has undergone surgery and is in a serious condition."



Private Sean Rooney was in an armoured vehicle that came under fire

Unifil's remit has changed since it was sent into Lebanon in 1978 with repeated bouts of conflict inside country and with the Israeli defence forces. Since 2006 it has been working with the Lebanese army to monitor Hezbollah and Israeli activity along the "blue line", as the de facto border is known, and a buffer zone to the north. There are occasional minor confrontations with villagers, largely those supportive of Hezbollah, and in previous decades substantial losses as a result of clashes and bombings.

Hezbollah said it was not involved in the latest incident and sent its condolences to the soldier's family.

The Irish army has provided soldiers to the multinational force from the outset and has lost 48 personnel, more than any other country. The latest death marked Ireland's first loss in Lebanon for more than two decades, Simon Coveney, its defence minister, told Irish radio. He said: "The two armoured vehicles effectively got separated, one of them got surrounded by a hostile mob … and unfortunately one of our peacekeepers was killed and another was very seriously injured."

The soldier in a serious condition was named as Private Shane Kearney, from Killeagh, Co Cork.

Anger at 'kidnap' of Lockerbie suspect

Libya
Richard Spencer
Middle East Correspondent
Elizia Volkmann Tunis

The Libyan authorities yesterday promised an inquiry into how the man accused of making the Lockerbie bomb was seized from his home and handed to the United States without judicial oversight.

Scottish and US prosecutors welcomed the appearance in a US court on Monday of Abu Agila Mohammad Masud, 71, an intelligence operative for the former dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Yet his unexpected extradition was attacked by rivals of the UN-recognised "interim" Libyan prime minister, Abdulhamid Dabaiba, who claim he sent militias to kidnap Masud to win US backing in the country's internecine conflicts.

Amid a row that threatens to reignite Libya's long-running civil war, Dabaiba's chief prosecutor, al-Siddiq al-Sour, said yesterday that he would open an investigation, though he gave few details.

Masud was identified as a bombmaker after Gaddafi fell in 2011. Sentenced by a revolutionary court to ten years in jail for other crimes, he is said to have signed a confession to his role in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing as part of a deal under which he was eventually released.

His family say a local militia seized him from his home in Tripoli last month. He was then taken to Misurata, Dabaiba's home town, and handed over to another militia loyal to the prime minister.

"What we think is that he was kidnapped," Fathi Bashagha, a rival self-styled "prime minister" said. "Of course this is outside the legal, judicial and legitimacy framework, and this is something I reject and do not recognise."

The bombing of PanAm flight 103 35 years ago killed 259 people on board and 11 people on the ground. Only one man — Abdelbaset al-Megrahi — was ever convicted. He died in 2012, stilll claiming his innocence.

Officials close to Dabaiba say that Masud was about to flee to the east when he was arrested.

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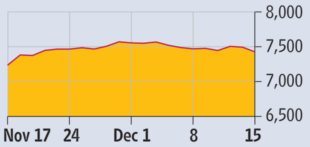
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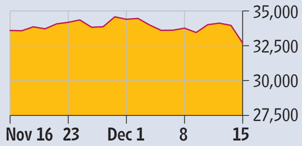
Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
7,426.17 (-69.76)

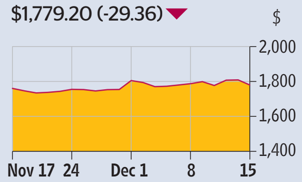


Dow Jones
33,202.22 (-764.13)

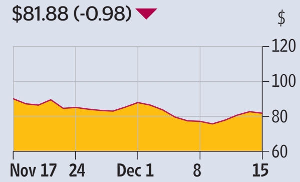


COMMODITIES

Gold
$1,779.20 (-29.36)

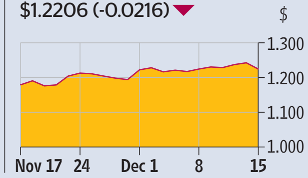


Brent crude (6pm)
$81.88 (-0.98)

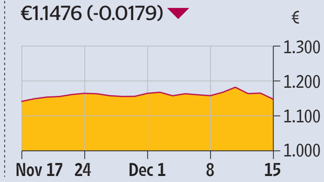


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.2206 (-0.0216)



£/€
€1.1476 (-0.0179)



ICE could relocate gas trading to London over Brussels price cap

Emily Gosden, Ben Martin

The American group behind the main European gas trading market is considering relocating it from Amsterdam to London in response to the European Union's proposed gas price cap.

Intercontinental Exchange warned Brussels that it would examine whether its market for the Dutch TTF (title transfer facility) gas price was "still viable" in the Netherlands if the EU proceeded with the cap. It is understood to be considering moving the market from its Amsterdam-based Endex exchange, where most gas futures trading for the crucial TTF contract takes place at present, potentially to its London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange.

ICE has said already that the EU's price cap could raise margin requirements on energy companies by up to $47 billion and it said it was "deeply concerned about whether the market can cope with meeting margin calls of this size".

The price cap would apply on trading carried out within the EU's jurisdiction, so analysts say its imposition could trigger a shift in TTF trading to other exchanges based outside the bloc, such as those operated by ICE's rivals. Rather than lose trade, ICE also could relocate its TTF market to an exchange where the cap would not apply.

In a memo to the EU, ICE said the price cap's imposition would leave "no time for resilient testing and thorough risk management. As a consequence it is the responsibility of ICE as the market operator to consider all options if this mechanism is agreed, up to and including whether an effective market in the Netherlands is still viable."

Richard Street, head of international regulatory affairs for Icis, the price reporting agency, said: "One of the well-known consequences of a price cap is the risk that exchanges simply move to other jurisdictions and trading recommences in a non-EU jurisdiction."

Since the Brexit vote in 2016, there has been a steady trickle of financial services jobs from Britain to the EU as City firms seek to ensure they can continue to serve their clients after the UK's departure from the bloc. One industry insider said EU interventions on gas trading were now "pushing people in financial services back to the UK".

Rate setters split over pace of rises

Committee settles on half-point increase

Arthi Nachiappan
Economics Correspondent

The Bank of England's interest rate-setting committee was divided over its latest decision, in which it increased rates for the ninth time in a row to 3.5 per cent.

One member of the monetary policy committee wanted to go further than the agreed rise of 0.5 percentage points and to repeat November's 0.75-point increase, the biggest since 1989. Others wanted to hold rates at 3 per cent.

Six members of the nine-strong committee, including Andrew Bailey, the Bank's governor, voted to continue raising rates but to slow the pace as economic activity lags, settling on a 0.5 per cent rise, in line with market predictions.

The pound fell by $0.0216 to $1.2206 after the announcement as investors sold the currency amid speculation that UK interest rates would peak at a lower level than expected. Sterling hit a high against the dollar at $1.2446 on Wednesday.

The currency fell by 1.29 per cent against the euro, sliding to €1.1483 after the European Central Bank raised its interest rate to 2 per cent and warned of more rises to come.

Catherine Mann, a former Citigroup economist who joined the MPC in 2021, voted for the 0.75-point rise to bring down expectations among households and businesses that inflation would remain high. Mann believed that, although there were signs inflation had peaked at 11.1 per cent in October, there was "greater evidence price and wage pressures would stay strong for longer" than the Bank had forecast in its latest set of projections published in November, according to the meeting minutes.

Swati Dhingra and Silvana Tenreyro, both professors at the London School of Economics, wanted to leave interest rates at 3 per cent because there were increasing signs that the economic slowdown was starting to affect the jobs market, arguing that lags in the effect of monetary policy meant the impact of previous rate rises was yet to be felt. To them, this meant interest rates at 3 per cent were "more than sufficient" to bring inflation back to the Bank's 2 per cent target.

Job vacancies fell for a fifth consecutive period in the three months to November as companies scaled back recruitment, official figures show. Unemployment rose slightly to 3.7 per cent but remained close to a historical low.

The economy grew by 0.5 per cent in October, but economists believe that is unlikely to stop Britain sinking into recession by the end of the year. Although inflation may have peaked in October, the impact of the cost of living on the economy is only beginning, with a prolonged downturn in GDP expected to start this winter and to last throughout 2023.

The rise in prices and wages could be persistent, justifying a "forceful" policy response, officials said in the minutes. They added: "Although activity in the economy was clearly weakening, there were some signs that it was more resilient than had been expected and it was therefore uncertain how quickly the labour market would loosen."

Gilt yields fell across the curve, with the UK's ten-year yield dropping by 1.81 per cent to 3.25 per cent.

End of the beginning, pages 40-41

ANNA GORDON/EYEVINE



On your bike ...

Rupert Soames has signed off from his tour of duty at Serco with a third profit upgrade in seven months. Serco initially forecast profits for 2022 would be £195 million. It now believes they will be £235 million. Migrants replace Covid as money-spinner, page 47

Plan to make tax digital delayed again

David Byers Assistant Money Editor

The biggest changes to personal taxation in a quarter of a century are to be postponed for a further two years because the computer systems are not ready, triggering concerns that the government is set for another costly public sector IT disaster.

The Treasury will postpone its programme to digitise the tax system — which would have forced 4.2 million self-employed workers and small businesses to file tax returns multiple times a year — from April 2024 until 2026.

The intention to launch the multi-billion-pound "Making tax digital" programme was announced by George Osborne in the 2015 spring budget. In the most significant change in the programme, anyone with annual income of more than £10,000 would have to keep accounting records digitally and to file quarterly updates to HMRC using new software, instead of the single annual update they do at present. The tax office believed this would make people declare their income more accurately and would pay tax more frequently, vastly reducing the £32 billion that the department claims is underpaid in tax each year, 5.1 per cent of the country's annual tax bill.

In September last year it was announced that the deadline for its introduction would be postponed from April 2023 to 2024 because IT systems were not ready.

Then, on Wednesday afternoon, the official departmental page for the programme was changed. It said: "The dates for helping HMRC test and develop Making Tax Digital for Income Tax have been extended to 6 April, 2026."

This update was removed within minutes, with an HMRC source saying an official had jumped the gun by misreading the embargo of the announcement.

Three big accountancy firms confirmed that they had been told that the move to 2026 was going to be announced shortly. Nimesh Shah, chief executive of Blick Rothenberg, said the lack of preparation by HMRC for the introduction had been "shambolic".

An HMRC spokeswoman apologised for details on the government website being "mistakenly changed". She would not comment on the timing of any announcement.

Business

Need to know

1 The Bank of England's monetary policy committee put up its interest rate for the ninth time in a row, taking the base rate to 3.5 per cent, and its governor said there was a "long way to go" before inflation was under control. **Pages 13, 39**

2 Intercontinental Exchange, the American group behind the main European gas trading market, is considering relocating it from Amsterdam to London in response to the European Union's proposed gas price cap. **Page 39**

3 The biggest changes to personal taxation in a quarter of a century are to be postponed for a further two years because the computer systems are not ready, triggering concerns that the government is set for another costly public sector IT disaster. The Treasury will postpone its programme to digitise the tax system from April 2024 until 2026. **Page 39**

4 Public confidence in the economy remains close to 50-year lows, despite a slight improvement in sentiment this month, a key survey by GfK has suggested.

5 Retail sales dropped by 0.6 per cent in the United States last month, more than anticipated and a sign of Americans' caution in the face of sustained inflation at the start of the holiday shopping season.

6 Cash-strapped consumers cutting back on their spending and disruption to markets overseas have helped to tip Currys into the red. The electricals retailer suffered an interim pre-tax loss of £548 million in the six months to October 29, compared with a profit of £48 million in the same period a year ago. **Page 42**

7 Ofwat, the water regulator, confirmed that small business customers would face a 6.4 per cent increase in their dual water and wastewater bills as it revealed its final decision on retail price caps. **Page 43**

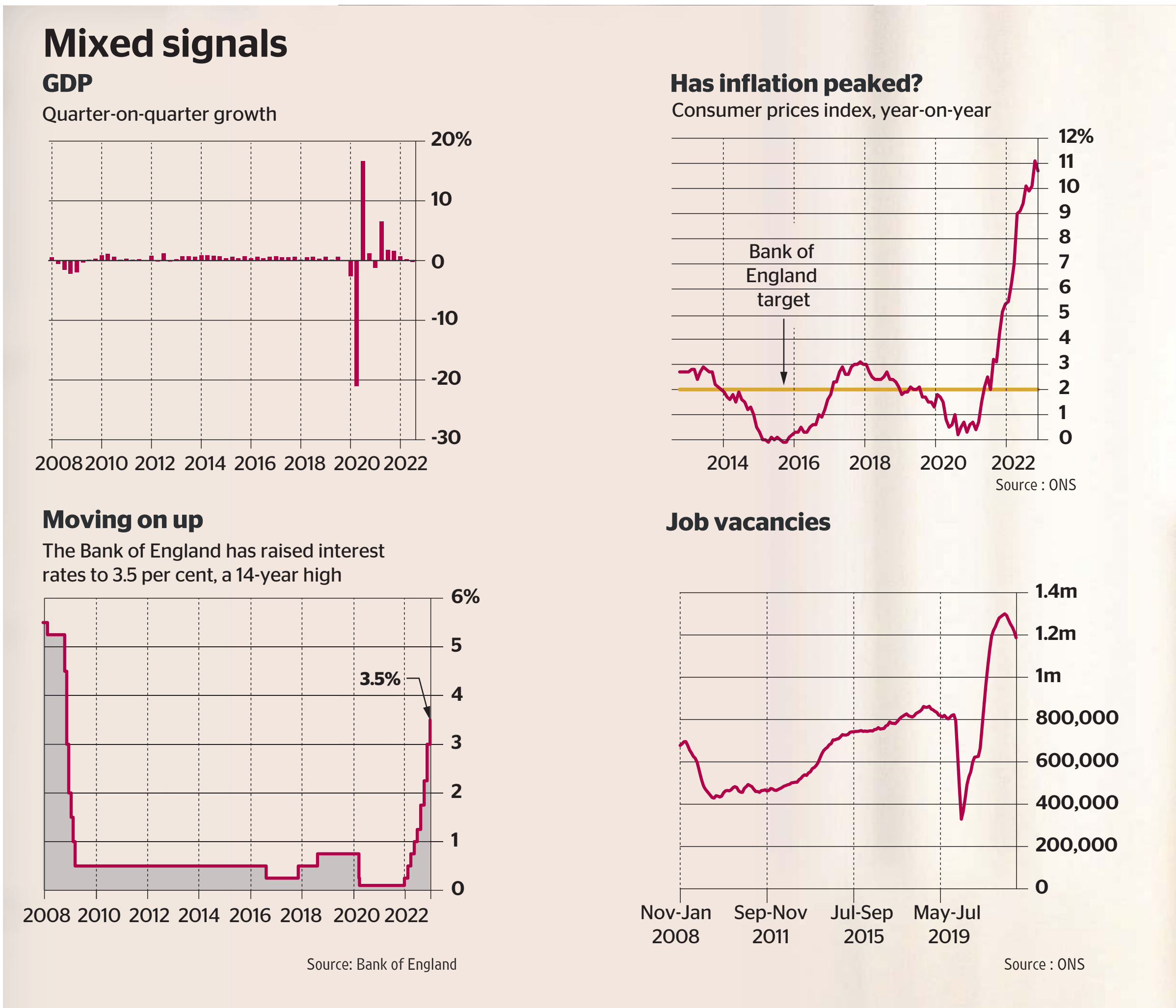
8 More than a dozen multinational drugs companies operating in Britain have put their names to an industry warning that a "rocketing" levy is forcing boardrooms to cut investment. In a deepening row, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry said the government's rate for next year, set out yesterday, was "extreme". **Page 44**

9 Bankers in the City of London and on Wall Street are bracing for a drop in their bonuses as firms wrestle with a slump in dealmaking amid economic turmoil. The scale of the bonus pool cuts is yet to be finalised. **Page 45**

10 Rupert Soames has signed off from his eight-year tour of duty at Serco with his third profit upgrade in seven months. What Serco has lost financially from the end of operating the government's test-and-trace Covid 19 scheme, it has more than made up with Britain's migrant crisis. **Page 47**

Middling rate rise may be the

The most hawkish phase of the fight against inflation could be coming to a close, writes **Patrick Hosking**



The Bank of England took a middling course with its half-point increase in the base interest rate to 3.5 per cent. This was a meaty and far more emphatic move than its first tentative tightening of policy exactly a year ago, when it lifted it by a timid 0.15 per cent to 0.25 per cent, but it's less than the muscular 0.75 per cent rise of six weeks ago. With this ninth increase in the space of a year, Threadneedle Street is signalling not the beginning of the end for policy tightening, but perhaps the end of the beginning.

There have been some promising signals. Inflation, though still rampant, is starting to retreat, with the annual rate falling from 11.1 per cent in October to 10.7 per cent in November. The core inflation rate, which strips out volatile elements, is also down.

Many leading indicators point to — fingers crossed — some welcome deflationary forces ahead. Shipping costs have plunged, the crude oil price has been sliding and sterling has powered higher against the dollar in the past month, reducing import costs.

Against that, Andrew Bailey, the Bank's governor, and his eight fellow ratesetters on the monetary policy committee have had to balance some awkward and inescapable facts. First, inflation is still more than five times ahead of their official 2 per cent target. Second, the labour market is still hot, risking what policymakers most fear — the second-round effects of higher wages feeding into further price increases. Average year-on-year weekly wage growth accelerated from 6 per cent in September to 6.4 per cent in October. Third, confidence in their ability to tame inflation lastingly has wavered. Public expectations for inflation in two years have risen to the highest level in ten years. Once inflation gets embedded into the thinking of employees and employers, it becomes very difficult to eliminate. Every strike leader in every television appearance is a reminder of how pay packets are being eroded in real terms.

That explains some of the wording in the latest Bank statement, including what it called a "greater persistence" in inflationary pressures, which could justify "a further forceful policy response".

Setting monetary policy is difficult at the best of times. Right now, it is even harder because of the slow and patchy way the base rate is transmitted into the real economy. The Bank still doesn't know the full effect of its previous eight increases in curbing business and household borrowing. Much borrowing is on fixed or semi-fixed terms. It can take three years or more for a base rate increase to fully feed through into the monthly bills of mortgage payers. Moreover, most households don't have mortgages. Businesses, too, are often immune to the immediate effect of higher interest rates.

Bailey is like a doctor coaxing more medicine into the patient when he doesn't know the final full effects of his previous eight spoonfuls. The danger of an overdose — a deeper and more prolonged recession than needed — will be at the back of his mind.

The MPC looks more divided than ever. Two members called for no rate rise at all this time, seizing on the argument that past tightening had yet to feed through and the economy was already weak. But one took the opposite view, arguing for a three-quarter-point rise to counter an "inflation psychology that was embedding in wage settlements and inflation expectations".

Wednesday's interest rate rise by the US Federal Reserve was another indication that the most hawkish phase of the global fight against inflation could be over. It raised its benchmark rate by half a percentage point to 4.25 per cent to 4.5 per cent, a tapering down from a series of larger moves, though it still signalled further rate increases next year.

The Times' own shadow MPC was pretty emphatic this week. Bailey needed to unleash another three-quarter-point increase on the nation.

It took years to stamp inflation out of the system in the 1970s and early 1980s, but the policy medicine helped to usher in decades of low-inflation economic growth and rising prosperity. The immense prize of defeating inflation is just too important for half-measures. The hawks will regard yesterday's half-point rise as just that.

Supply woes

Arthi Nachiappan
Economics Correspondent

Companies that used up cash reserves stockpiling materials when supply disruptions were at their worst are scaling back plans to invest as a result, a Bank of England survey has found.

The rising cost of loans is also driving firms to focus on reducing existing debt rather than borrowing more, according to the Bank's regional agents.

"Companies paused or reduced investment plans due to weak demand, tighter financial conditions and uncertainty about the outlook," their report reads.

Consumer services firms were affected most seriously after demand dried up amid the squeeze on household incomes from the high cost of living.

"A number of contacts said that they had less cash available for investment

Wary consumers have little confidence in economy

James Hurley

Public confidence in the economy remains close to 50-year lows, despite a slight improvement in sentiment this month, a key survey suggests.

For the eighth month in a row, GfK's consumer confidence index has measured -40 or below, the first time this has happened since the research series began in 1974.

December's score of -42 was a two-point improvement on the previous month, but Joe Staton, client strategy director at GfK, said the figures represented a warning of a "tough road ahead and that the UK is not out of the recessionary woods. Real wages are falling as inflation continues to bite hard, further straining the discretionary budget of many households as we enter the last few shopping days before Christmas."

The research measures a range of consumer attitudes and is closely watched by policymakers. Before Brexit, the poll was carried out on behalf of the European Commission. It is now funded by GfK, a data provider.

It is based on a monthly poll of 2,000 individuals and asks questions on their personal financial situation and economic sentiment, their likelihood of making big household purchases and whether they think now is a good time to save. Staton said people's outlook for

−42

Consumer confidence for December, a two-point improvement on November
GfK

their personal financial situation was still poor and "concerns about our economic future remain acute. As we enter the festive season, the overall index score is still depressed and, with scant seasonal joy at present and no immediate prospect of fiscal good news, it is unlikely we will see a rebound in confidence any time soon."

The savings index was the only aspect of the survey with a healthier score than this time last year, perhaps thanks to higher interest rates, which have been pushed up in response to four-decade high inflation.

The Federation of Small Businesses, Britain's largest employers' group, described consumer confidence yesterday as "near rock-bottom".

Official insolvency figures published this week showed that the number of individual voluntary arrangements, a form of personal insolvency, are higher than they were last year and before the pandemic. However, levels of bankruptcy, a more stringent form of personal insolvency, are well below pre-pandemic levels.

end of the beginning



Andrew Bailey: governor of The Bank of England

prompt fall in investment

because they had been obliged to build up stocks in order to manage supply chain disruption," the Bank said.

Shortages of components, such as the semiconductors used to make cars and smartphones, caused disruptions that increased the costs of producing goods and services last year. These were made worse by coronavirus restrictions in China during March and April, which stopped supplies leaving the world's biggest port in Shanghai. The Russian invasion of Ukraine exacerbated the problem.

However, the disruptions have settled in recent months, according to the latest purchasing managers' surveys.

The Bank has a network of about a dozen regional representatives, known as agents, in Glasgow, Manchester and other areas. Their report is based on interviews conducted with about 700 businesses between mid-October and late November.

The Bank said that for companies that borrowed to invest, higher costs of funding such borrowing had increased uncertainty around their investment plans by extending the payback period on projects.

However, rising energy costs have given companies an incentive to invest in improving the efficiency of their power supplies. Costs for firms remained high despite the fall in gas prices over the survey period because of the fall in the value of the pound.

"Input cost inflation remained elevated, as falls in some commodity prices and freight costs were offset by higher energy costs and the weak pound. Profit margins remained squeezed as firms' price increases have not kept pace with rising costs," the Bank said.

Eurozone's latest rise 'won't be enough'

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

Interest rates have been increased across the 19 nations of the eurozone, with its central bank signalling that rates are heading higher for a considerable time.

The European Central Bank lifted its benchmark rate by 0.5 per cent to 2 per cent in an attempt to bear down on eurozone inflation, which was at 10 per cent in November.

While the half-point rise was smaller than two previous increases of 0.75 per cent in July and September, the ECB's tone was seen as hawkish.

"We judge that interest rates will still have to rise significantly and at a steady pace," Christine Lagarde, president of the central bank, said. Further half-point rises should be expected for "a considerable amount of time. We will sustain the course. It will not be enough to hit and withdraw."

Luke Bartholomew, senior economist at Abrdn, the fund manager, said the comments were "strikingly hawkish".

It came as the UK rate was lifted by 0.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent, the Swiss rate by 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent and Norway's by 0.25 per cent to 2.75 per cent. The United States increased its policy rate by 0.5 per cent to 4.25 per cent to 4.5 per cent on Wednesday.

Inflation has surged in the eurozone since the reopening of economies after lockdowns, driven by supply chain bottlenecks and rising energy costs in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine. The ECB has a target inflation rate of 2 per cent. The central bank said it expected the eurozone to encounter a "short-lived and shallow" recession.

Despite energy prices surging after Russia cut off most natural gas supplies, the European Union has succeeded in largely filling underground storage for the winter.

The ECB also laid out plans to taper its stimulative quantitative easing programme. It will reduce reinvestments through its bond-buying programme by €15 billion a month, starting in March.

The statement and Lagarde's comments pushed the euro above $1.07, its highest level against the dollar for nearly half a year. It also strengthened sharply against sterling, with the pound now buying less than €1.15.

American shoppers reduce spending

Callum Jones

Retail sales dropped by 0.6 per cent in the United States last month, more than anticipated and a sign of Americans' caution in the face of sustained inflation at the start of the holiday shopping season.

The fall in November, which exceeded economists' expectations of a drop of about 0.1 per cent, came after an increase of 1.3 per cent in October.

Shoppers spent less on categories including electronics, clothing and cars. Retail sales comprise mostly goods and, unlike many other official data releases from the US government, this report is not adjusted for inflation.

Price growth hit its highest level in a generation in America this summer, before moderating slightly. The country's consumer prices index slipped to an annual pace of 7.1 per cent in November.

Yesterday's retail sales reading was one of several economic releases that rattled investors. Industrial production fell by 0.2 per cent in November, driven by a 0.6 per cent drop in manufacturing activity, according to the US Federal Reserve.

Such reports have compounded apprehension over the prospect of a recession in the world's largest economy. The Fed, having lifted US interest rates from close to zero to their highest level in 15 years, has made clear it expects to push them higher in 2023.

"The 0.6 per cent month-on-month falls in retail sales and manufacturing output in November suggest that the economy has lost some serious momentum, with the resilience of consumers to much higher interest rates starting to crumble," Andrew Hunter, at Capital Economics, said.

The lower retail sales and the Fed's stance on rates sent markets lower, with the Dow Jones industrial average closing down 764.13 points, or 2.6 per cent, at 33,202.22. The S&P 500 was off 2.5 per cent, or 99.57 points, at 3,895.75 and the Nasdaq was 3.2 per cent, or 360.36 points, lower at 10,810.53.

Half-point increase is just half-baked



BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Safety in numbers. Which number, you ask? 0.5 per cent: the optimum rate rise, apparently, for the US Fed, the ECB and the Bank of England. How's that for an amazing coincidence?

Just think: at this precise moment in the history of the universe, a half-point rise is exactly the inflation-taming medicine required for the differing needs of: a) the world's biggest economy; b) a 27-country bloc locked together on the same currency; and c) a plucky, Brexiteer island nation. Call it central banking groupthink, if you like, though that'll make you more depressed — remembering how we got into this inflationary mess in the first place.

Anyway, we are where we are. The Bank of England's ratesetters are back again, ratcheting things up for the ninth successive time, rather implying the nine-strong troupe was a bit late to the party. Rates are now at 3.5 per cent, the highest in 14 years. And, arguably, the most telling thing was the three-way split on the monetary policy committee. It suggests their thinking's taken a doveish turn, with economists now expecting 4-4.5 per cent peak rates.

After the 0.75 per cent fireworks of six weeks ago (matching the Fed and the ECB, natch), only one member, Catherine Mann, wanted a repeat: a figure that had got seven votes last time. Two, Swati Dhingra and Silvana Tenreyro, voted for no change, somehow reasoning that holding rates at 3 per cent would restore November's 10.7 per cent inflation to the 2 per cent target. In the middle sat governor Andrew Bailey and five other half-pointers.

They're divided, partly because it's a tough call and partly because Bailey's under political pressure not to crash the housing market or jack up the government's debt servicing costs. There are some signs inflation has peaked, down from October's 11.1 per cent, while the MPC pointed to falling shipping costs and a 15 per cent drop in crude oil prices to $80 a barrel — even if the key issue, energy prices, is guesswork. A stronger pound against the dollar since the last meeting cuts the risk of importing more inflation. And, as Capital Economics noted, the Bank dropped the line on inflationary risks being skewed to the "upside".

Then there's the time lag issue. After nine rates rises in a year, no one yet knows their effect. Hence Dhingra and Tenreyro's concerns that "sizeable impacts from past rate increases were still to come through" for an economy already in recession. The impact can be hard to judge, with many mortgages and business loans on fixed rates. The MPC also has to weigh up Jeremy Hunt's autumn statement tax rises.

Even so, Mann is right that, with private sector wage growth at 6.9 per cent in the three months to October, there's a strong case for "leaning against an inflation psychology that was embedding in wage settlements and inflation expectations". It's a key reason for the rash of strikes, spanning nurses, rail workers and posties. Yes, 0.5 per cent is a nice safe figure in central banking land. But 0.75 per cent would have done a swifter job of resetting those expectations, paving the way for faster rate cuts. The Bank's decision looks half-baked.

Currying no favour

Here are a few ingredients that don't go well with Currys: Verkkokauppa, NetOnNet, Komplett, Power. What are they? Four Nordic retailers that have left Alex Baldock all hot and bothered. The boss of the electricals outfit has spent the past half-year grappling with their "unprofitable aggression", as he puts it: a price war that's sent profits in his normally reliable Nordic wing crashing 95 per cent to only £3 million (report, page 42).

Something similar, though on a smaller scale, has happened in Greece: the sort of thing that makes you wonder if Baldock's Currys' tenure isn't jinxed. Having taken charge in April 2018 with the shares about £2 and revamped what used to be called Dixons Carphone, he can justifiably point to a better UK business. Underlying profits rose a quarter to £25 million, with gross margins up 1.6 percentage points, boosted by his push into consumer credit and repair revenues. Yet that's been spoilt by the Nordics.

The upshot? He's had to cut full-year profits guidance to as little as £100 million from a previous £125 million to £145 million: the reason the shares fell 6 per cent to 61½p. He's probably right that the "excess stock" fuelling the Nordics discounting will "wash through" and that, with a quarter of the UK market, Currys should capitalise on a domestic tech market 14 per cent bigger than pre-pandemic. But the figures also came with a reminder of value destruction in this business: a £511 million goodwill write-off on 2014's £3.8 billion Dixons/Carphone Warehouse tie-up that still leaves £1.3 billion goodwill. Underlying UK sales were down 10 per cent, too.

And, having already cut his 4 per cent operating margin target to 3 per cent, Baldock's now "prudently" pushed it back a year to 2024-25. He says that long-term he knows he'll be "judged" on the share price and "I'm happy about that". Investors are not quite so confident.

Musk's ATM trip

Not another Elon Musk Tesla share sale. The latest $3.6 billion makes almost $40 billion this year. All the more impressive, too, given April's tweet: "No further TSLA sales planned after today." Instead, he's continued to use the car company as "his own ATM machine to keep funding the red ink at Twitter", as Wedbush analyst Dan Ives puts it, predicting that his $44 billion buy "will go down as the most overpaid tech acquisition in the history of M&A".

Musk still owns 13 per cent of Tesla. But, as Ives notes, he's wrecking the investment story "by selling more stock and creating Tesla brand deterioration through his actions on Twitter". He thinks it time the board stood up to him. He's right.

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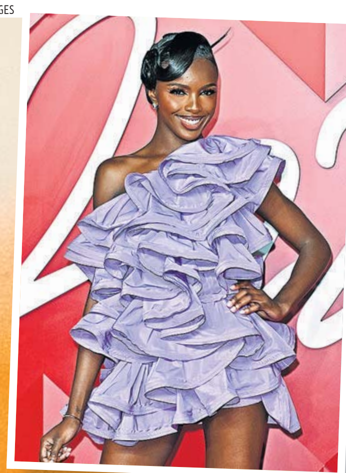
H&M left trailing in sales stakes by big rival

Comparisons with its greatest rival proved costly for H&M yesterday, despite the world's second biggest fashion retailer reporting a rise in fourth-quarter sales (Dominic Walsh writes).

The Swedish-owned business, which recently shed 1,500 head-office jobs to save costs, increased net sales by 10 per cent to SKr62.4 billion (£5 billion) in the three months to the end of November, or 11 per cent excluding its operations in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The company sold off its remaining stock and its last shops closed in Russia and Belarus two weeks ago. A fresh outbreak of Covid-19 in China also took its toll, prompting the temporary closure of up to 50 stores.

However, the shadow of Inditex, the Spanish-owned group that is the world's biggest fashion seller, was the biggest drag on H&M's share price, which fell 6.8 per cent, or SKr8.18, to SKr 111.24 last night. H&M's sales for the year to November rose 12 per cent to SKr223.5 billion, but those of Inditex, the owner of Zara, leapt by 19 per cent in the most recent nine-month period. Analysts at JP Morgan called it "a slightly disappointing update".





H&M; KARWAI TANG/GETTY IMAGES

H&M's sales for the year to November rose by 12 per cent, lower than those at Zara's owner, Inditex



Cost of living hits spending and sends Currys into a loss

Emma Taggart

Cash-strapped consumers cutting back on their spending and disruption to markets overseas have helped to tip Currys into the red.

The electricals retailer suffered an interim pre-tax loss of £548 million in the six months to October 29, compared with a profit of £48 million in the same period a year ago.

The figure was also driven by a non-cash goodwill impairment of £511 million, which the company said had arisen after the Dixons Carphone merger in 2014 and did not reflect its cash levels or performance. The dividend was unchanged at 1p.

The business was created through the £3.7 billion merger of Dixons Retail and Carphone Warehouse in 2014. It has 826 shops and more than 30,000 employees.

The Nordics region suffered losses as low demand left competitors with excess stock, leading rival stores to slash prices while Currys kept its prices the same.

As a result of the tougher trading conditions, Currys downgraded its full-year profit forecast to between £100 million and £125million, from a previous suggestion of between £125 million and £145 million.

Revenue in the UK and Ireland fell by 10 per cent on last year to £2.3 billion as group revenues were 7 per cent lower at £4.5 billion.

Alex Baldock, 52, Currys' chief executive, said: "On the one hand, the customer, obviously, is hard-pressed, they are spending less and there is some trading down to less expensive items. And they are certainly looking for a deal, as we saw during the Black Friday sales period.

£548m

Half-year loss suffered by Currys, the electricals group
Source: Currys

"On the other hand, even in the teeth of a cost of living crisis, customers are still spending more than they were pre-pandemic. That, we believe, reflects the fact that technology plays a more important role in people's lives, keeping them connected, productive, healthy and entertained. There is also some trading up to items that are more expensive but more energy-efficient because people are thinking about the running costs."

Baldock said energy-efficient products, such as washing machines, heat-pump tumble dryers, air fryers, microwaves and heated blankets were "flying off the shelves".

Currys also noted a rise in some customers turning to credit to purchase electrical items, while others were opting to repair technology products to make them last longer.

Baldock said there had been no signs of stress in its lending book, despite an increase in customers accessing credit. "We are very careful who we lend to and how much we lend. We partner with a very cautious bank and we do this because we don't want to come within a mile of customers getting into trouble with credit."

The group said it was on track to make £300 million in cost savings in the UK and Ireland by 2023-24, focused on making its supply chains and IT systems more efficient. It has no plans to close stores or lose staff.

Shares in Currys fell 5.7 per cent, or 3¾p, to 61½p last night.

Tempus, page 48

Britain lagging in full-fibre broadband

Mark Sellman

Britain still lags behind many European and Asian countries in the fastest broadband league tables, despite a record pace of rollout, Ofcom has revealed.

Full-fibre broadband is the gold standard for delivering fast internet speeds of up to one gigabit per second that enable households to download a one-hour high-definition television episode in eight seconds.

According to the regulator's annual *Connected Nations* report, in the past 12 months 4.3 million more premises have been hooked up to full fibre, meaning that 42 per cent of the population, or 2.4 million homes, now have it.

Despite the highest year-on-year increase, the UK still lags behind Spain (with 89 per cent coverage), France (at 63 per cent) and Italy (at 44 per cent), according to 2021 figures. Asian countries such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan and China have almost 100 per cent coverage. Only Northern Ireland in the home nations comes close, with 85 per cent.

Full-fibre broadband is crucial for supporting economic growth as businesses demand more bandwidth and as people work from home. However, households are still reluctant to embrace it, with only a quarter signing up when it is available in their area. This is being blamed on people being tied into contracts and poor communication about its benefits and pricing.

Andrew Ferguson, lead data scientist and editor at thinkbroadband, said: "We're building the networks faster than anyone really ever expected. The key move now is to continue building."

Harry Wallop



We are holding too many meetings and they are lasting far too long



Viterbo, about an hour and half north of Rome, is well worth a visit if you are in the area. It has a fine medieval centre, the jewel of which is the Palazzo dei Papi. It was here that the first papal conclave, when cardinals are locked inside a room until they can decide on whom the new pope should be, took place.

Unfortunately, in the late 1260s they couldn't make up their minds. The proceedings in Viterbo dragged on and on. The authorities became so frustrated that they put the cardinals on starvation rations, hoping this would force them to hurry up. Eventually, after 20 months, the good people of Viterbo started to dismantle the roof of the palace, hoping the Holy Spirit could enter the cardinals' hearts a little more directly. You can still see the marks in the floor where the cardinals erected tent poles to protect themselves from the elements.

Finally, after 1,034 days they elected Pope Gregory X, whose main legacy is that he reformed the rules for electing popes.

That first Viterbo conclave remains one of the longest, most tortured meetings in history and a reminder to us how little can be achieved when a group of intelligent people gather in a room to discuss important matters.

I thought of Viterbo last week when I read that a European Union meeting in Brussels went on for 17 and a half hours. It was a regular Coreper 1 meeting, when the 27 ambassadors to the EU gather to thrash out various issues. On the agenda last week was a debriefing on deforestation, a directive concerning roll-on, roll-off ferries and regulations about machinery products. Standard fare, not an emergency meeting to decide whether to bomb Moscow. After it finished at 1.50am the Czech presidency of the EU hailed it as an "extraordinary success".

When a journalist from The Economist magazine suggested that such a long meeting was "embarrassing" and a sign of the EU's dysfunction, Philip Stephens, the author, said: "After the first half of the 20th century, many Europeans decided that talking was better than killing each other. I am not quite sure what the harm is of 17-hour meetings."

I'll tell you what the harm is. It's insane. It is no way to run a professional body. By 1am, the motivating factor behind most of the decision-making won't be: "This is the right thing to do". It will be: "I want to go home."

"People use tiredness as a negotiating tactic," one former civil servant told me. "If you're all completely knackered, you agree to whatever so that you can catch your flight home."

Last month, the final session of the Cop 27 climate change conference closed at 9am on Sunday morning, 39 hours later than planned. Again, many saw this as a triumph, a marathon piece of diplomacy and a sign of the gravity of the issue, rather than proof that the people running the show were incompetent. They had either failed to do enough homework beforehand or had an agenda that was unrealistic. The Coreper working document for the 17-and-a-half-hour meeting ran to 1,358 pages.

It is not so much the length of these meetings that are the problem, but that bosses seem to think a meeting is a substitute for making a decision and then have little idea how to manage them.

According to the Microsoft Work Trend Index, which surveys 20,000 workers across 11 different markets, the number of meetings each week has increased by 153 per cent since the start of the pandemic, with no sign this trend is reversing.

In the age of hybrid working, a quick Zoom or Teams may seem a harmless way of establishing what everyone is up to, but this productivity theatre is counterproductive. The Microsoft report found that 42 per cent of participants multitasked during meetings by sending emails or messages. Are they really listening?

Some companies have tried to cut meeting times. Forty minutes became the default length for some firms, because that was the length of time that you could schedule a Zoom call in the free version of the software.

Donna McGeorge is author of *The 25 Minute Meeting: Half the Time, Double the Impact*. She — it won't surprise you to discover — thinks meetings should often be 25 minutes. This seems pretty ruthless, but not as ruthless as her recommendation for how those minutes are split up. A dozen minutes for: "What are we here for?" Eight minutes for: "What are the two or three things that require our attention?" Five minutes for: "What actions are required?"

That's fine if it's a team who meet regularly, but what if it's a new group of people? You need five minutes for chitchat about the weather and everyone's opinions on the Harry and Meghan doc.

We all know the gossip on the way from the meeting room to the lift is often the most useful and creative three minutes of the day, something that's hard to replicate online.

Ishveen Jolly, the founder and chief executive of OpenSponsorship, a technology platform, insists everyone talks at the all-team online Monday morning meeting, arguing that it helps with productivity. "Previously, we used to ask everyone to talk about their weekend but we received complaints that everyone stops listening and that it's a waste of time," she said. "Now we pose a question. Two weeks ago it was, 'What do you hope to achieve before the end of the year personally and professionally?' "

Meetings, especially when they are online, should be about the human connection. Otherwise it could all be sorted out in an email. But we need to have fewer of them and we need to turn up knowing why we are there.

And if you are stuck in any meeting that lasts longer than an hour — start taking the roof off. That should speed things up.

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on Twitter @hwallop

Watchdog raises cap on small firms' water bills

Dominic Walsh

Ofwat confirmed yesterday that small business customers would face a 6.4 per cent increase in their dual water and wastewater bills as it revealed its final decision on retail price caps.

The water regulator said the decision, which applies to those using less than 500,000 litres a year, would enable efficient retailers to earn a fair return while supporting the long-term stability of the business retail market.

It said that final bills for customers on a dual-metered tariff across all regions of England would increase by about 6.4 per cent before inflation. Household customers are unaffected.

Ofwat said it also had decided to simplify price caps for smaller business customers by switching from the existing system based on regional price caps to a national price cap applicable across the whole of England. The regulator said it had concluded that the cost of serving small business customers did not vary regionally and that the new price cap, to be introduced in April, would reflect that cost.

To help to manage the impact on business customers, Ofwat said it would bring in the new price caps over a two-year period, limiting annual changes in customers' retail charges to no more £60 a year, before inflation.

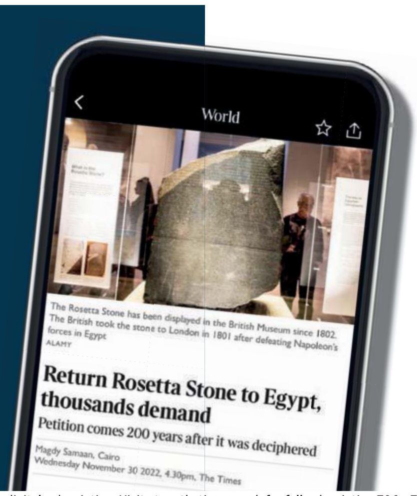
Georgina Mills, business retail market director at Ofwat, said: "Our price caps ensure the business retail market is fair for small businesses that don't shop around as much as larger businesses do. We need to make sure that these caps are at the right level so that efficient water retailers can cover the costs of supplying their customers and small businesses don't pay more than they should."

Since April 2017, about 1.2 million business customers in England have been eligible to choose their supplier of retail water and wastewater services. Ofwat plans to review the new price caps again in three to five years' time.

The country's 17 privatised water companies have been put on notice that the watchdog will intervene on their executive pay arrangements and will block dividend payments if they miss environmental and operational targets.

The water industry, which loses more than 20 per cent of supply through defective pipes, has high levels of customer complaints and faces criticisms about executive pay in the sector. It has been warned to expect a tough new charges settlement for the rest of the decade.

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Drugs levy 'forcing life sciences sector to cut investment'

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

More than a dozen multinational drugs companies operating in Britain have put their names to an industry warning that a "rocketing" levy is forcing boardrooms to cut investment.

In a deepening row, the industry said the government's rate for next year, set out yesterday, was "extreme".

In a highly critical and co-ordinated response, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry said the levy meant manufacturers of branded medicines would be required to return an estimated £3.3 billion in sales revenue to the government, a rate of 26.5 per cent, up from £563 million last year and about £1.8 billion this year.

The UK heads of 13 drugs companies, including Sanofi, Bayer, Merck and Gilead, joined the industry in warning that it was being forced to reduce its footprint and research and manufacturing investments in Britain.

The industry said the levy "comes on top of other rising business taxes and the costs of doing business in the UK" and was more than double that of "any comparable country, taking UK clawbacks to levels normally associated with Romania and Greece".

It added: "If the UK cannot address this issue in future years, the industry does not believe the government's life sciences vision will be deliverable."

Despite consecutive governments championing the industry as crucial to post-Brexit success, Britain's performance across key measures is weaker than other leading developed economies, including for investment and access to new medicines, and the nation's share of global pharmaceuticals research and development has been weakening.

The voluntary scheme for branded medicines pricing and access, known as Vpas, is an agreement between the health department and the drugs industry designed to limit the NHS's medicines bill while supporting innovation in the industry. It requires drugs companies to pay rebates on their sales of branded medicines back to the NHS if the health service's overall spending for medicines rises by more than 2 per cent annually.

The industry says the rates have soared in the wake of increased NHS demand after the pandemic and it now deems the present system, due to end next year, "beyond breaking point and outside anything seen elsewhere in the developed world".

The government's life sciences council met at the end of last month in a gathering of chief executives headed by Steve Barclay, the health secretary, and Grant Shapps, the business secretary. The industry is calling for early talks in the new year to set out a "completely new future settlement".

Richard Torbett, head of the industry body, said it had received "important assurances from the government" that they could "agree on a mutually beneficial approach".

Jessamy Baird, head of Sanofi UK & Ireland, said the rate was "reflective of the deteriorating commercial environment in the UK, which is likely to cause disinvestment, slow growth and productivity".

A spokesman for the department said the scheme was "vital in helping to improve patient access to the best available medicines at a price which is the most cost-effective for the NHS. The increase in this year's payment percentage is due to a growth in sales of branded medicines to the NHS that industry has benefited from. This means the scheme is working as intended and the NHS can afford to buy the latest medicines, in turn increasing sales for industry."

TOBI BOHN/MERCK



The levy is designed to limit the NHS medicines bill, but the amount has soared

THE TIMES Business briefing



Stock markets across the world remain volatile following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Oil and gas prices have been spiralling, while British companies are scrambling to cope with the effects of soaring costs. With the situation changing by the hour, keeping up to date is essential. Get the latest news and market reaction by 8am, and analysis at 12.30pm, direct by email from the Business Editor, Richard Fletcher, and Business News Editor, Martin Strydom.

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Bankers fear for bonuses as deals slump

Ben Martin Banking Editor

Bankers in the City of London and on Wall Street are bracing for a drop in their bonuses as firms wrestle with a slump in dealmaking amid economic turmoil.

The scale of the bonus pool cuts is yet to be finalised, but the indications are that payouts for many bankers are likely to be significantly lower than last year, when a surge in deals boosted variable compensation for financiers.

It emerged on Wednesday that Goldman Sachs, one of the biggest names on Wall Street which also has a large presence in London, was looking at cutting its bonus pool for its investment bankers by at least 40 per cent. Rivals including JP Morgan, where the pool for its investment bankers is expected to shrink by between 25 per and 30 per cent, are also set to lower variable pay.

The heavy cuts anticipated at Goldman, first reported by the Financial Times, have brought speculation that disgruntled bankers could seek more lucrative employment elsewhere, such as private equity.

"The market is down and we pay people according to market conditions and performance," a senior London-based banker at Goldman said. "For me, this is a Street-wide phenomenon."

He did not expect an exodus of employees to rival banks. "I don't really see where you go. The whole of Wall Street has got the same issue and so I don't think you're going to find that there's a bunch of banks hiring while others are losing."

Investment bankers earn fees for advising companies on listings, share sales, takeovers and mergers.

However, dealmaking volumes have fallen this year as company management teams have taken fright at soaring inflation, which has forced central banks in Britain, the United States and Europe to rapidly raise rates and has stoked worries about a recession.

Data from Refinitiv, the financial information provider, shows that investment banking fees generated in Britain have fallen by 43 per cent year-on-year to $5 billion so far in 2022. It comes after a blowout year for UK fees in 2021, when they reached $8.9 billion after deal volumes surged.

The biggest drop this year has been in fees for equity capital markets work, which involves flotations and other share sales. These deals have tumbled in volume as volatility in stock markets has risen, pushing down UK fees generated in this area by 83 per cent, according to Refinitiv.

Numis, the independent investment bank and broker, said last week that it had been the quietest year for equity capital markets activity for a decade. The group said in its annual results that its overall revenues had fallen by a third to £144.2 million, from a record £215.6 million in 2021.

One top mergers and acquisitions banker at a big firm in London said his deal pipeline looked sparse. "I've been doing this 20 years. The last time I can remember it being this bad was post the financial crisis," he said.

The banker said he expected his firm's bonus pool to be reduced from last year, but noted that those payouts had been exceptional. "It isn't time to start feeling sorry for bankers," he said.

A Goldman spokesman said: "The compensation process is not yet completed, so any discussion or forecast on specific numbers is premature."

Market malaise hits the heart of London

Even prime London housing has not been immune to the downturn in the wider property market after the rise in interest rates and amid recent political turmoil, the latest data suggests (Alex Ralph writes).

The number of homes going under offer last month was down 14.6 per cent compared with November last year and sales agreed dropped by 4.8 per cent over the same period, despite the high-end market being less dependent on mortgages, figures from LonRes, a housing data business, show.

There are also signs of increased supply, with the number of new instructions up 4.6 per cent in November year-on-year.

However, there is no sign of prices falling across prime London postcodes. The average achieved price per square foot rose by 1.9 per cent, albeit down from a peak of 8.9 per cent in July, and the picture for local markets within prime parts of the capital is varied.

The highest house price growth was in Marylebone at 12.7 per cent, followed by Knightsbridge and Belgravia at 9.3 per cent and Fulham and Earl's Court at 6.7 per cent.

LonRes said the broader trend appeared to be higher price rises in the "prime fringe" of London, in areas such as Vauxhall, Nine Elms, Borough and Kennington, followed by "prime inner", including Hampstead and St John's Wood, and with "prime central", such as Chelsea and South Kensington, recording the lowest price growth.

"This situation could well reverse next year as the more mortgage-dependent prime fringe markets start to struggle," it said.

Anthony Payne, managing director at LonRes, said: "It's the lack of choice that's underpinning this market and acting as a support to prices. In the final weeks of 2022 we have seen a flurry of top-end sales, which include a flat with an asking price of £34.5 million, a house priced at £13 million, another at £10.5 million and flats at £6.8 million and at £5 million.

"On the lettings front, there continues to be a dearth of properties to rent. Private landlords we hear are selling up and corporate landlords are not able to add supply fast enough to meet demand. It's difficult to see what will act as a catalyst for change and in the meantime, rents keep rising." LonRes is a subscription data platform used by about 5,000 residential property professionals in prime London.

ALEXANDER SPATARI/GETTY IMAGES



Fewer homes are being sold in prime London areas, even though the top end of the market is less dependent on mortgages and interest rates

High electricity prices power up Drax

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

High and volatile electricity prices have fuelled a third profit upgrade this year at Drax.

The FTSE 250 power generator, which runs biomass, hydro-electric and pumped storage plants, said its adjusted earnings before interest, tax and other charges for 2022 would be "slightly above the top of the range" of analysts' expectations of up to £681 million. That compares with a figure of £398 million in 2021.

It said its "pumped storage and hydro assets have performed strongly in the second half of 2022, providing a wide range of services to the system operator in support of system stability and renewable electricity".

It also capitalised on a fall in short-term gas and power prices in October and bought back some of the power output from its biomass units that it had pre-sold at higher prices and then re-sold to third parties the wood pellets that it would have burnt.

The company noted uncertainties over the outlook for next year, however, as the government's windfall tax on power providers kicks in from January and as the cost of wood pellets for its biomass plant rises, which together could make it less economic to generate at certain times. Drax has been in talks with the government over possible adjustments to the tax to reflect its higher running costs and yesterday it said that it expected an update on this shortly.

Drax operates a power plant at the village of Drax, near Selby in North Yorkshire, that is Britain's biggest power station, primarily burning biomass wood pellets. It has kept two old coal units open at the site at the request of the government. It also runs four pumped storage and hydroelectric plants and has a business producing some of its own wood pellet supplies at locations in America.

Despite upgrading its 2022 outlook again yesterday, it warned of potential problems for next year as the cost of biomass in the European spot market had "increased significantly" over the past year to trade at more than three times the historical average. Together with the imposition of the windfall tax on electricity generators, this "could make generation at certain times less economic and is expected to restrict the group's purchase of additional biomass cargoes at spot prices".

The electricity generators levy is due to tax 45 per cent of nuclear and renewable power generators' wholesale market revenues over £75 per megawatt-hour. It is expected to apply to three of Drax's four biomass units.

Shares in Drax rose 19½p, or 3.1 per cent, to 646p.

Lenders back expansion of risk management business

Katie Prescott

A business that enables banks to share information about risk has raised $24 million from a consortium of five big banks to develop new products and move into different areas of finance.

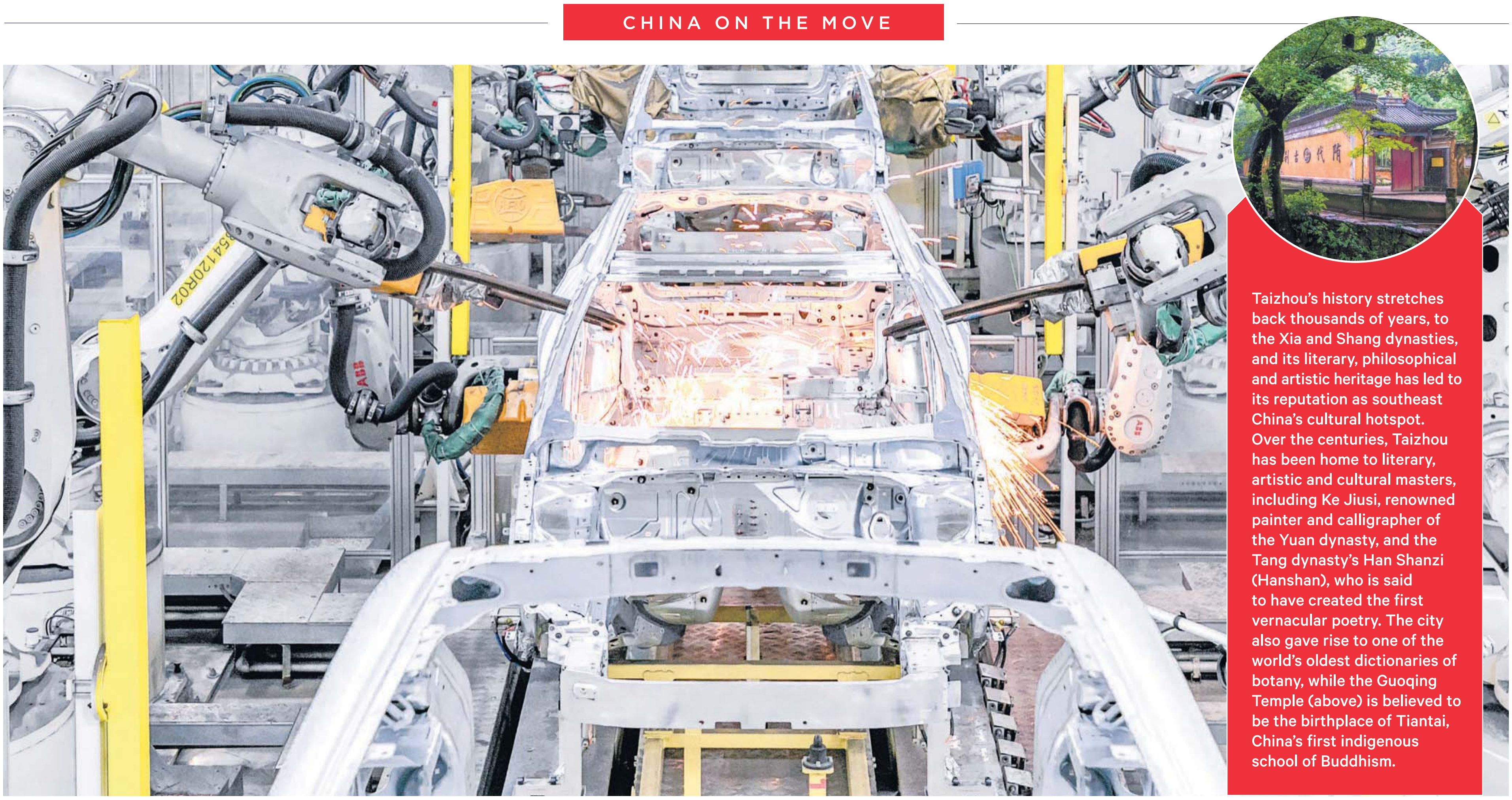
Acin's funding came from JP Morgan, Citi, BNP Paribas, Barclays and Lloyds Banking Group as part of a strategy to improve their risk management processes. The lenders have invested alongside existing backers that contributed to a previous $12 million funding round in 2020, including Notion Capital, Talis Capital and Fitch Ventures, the investment division of the ratings group.

Acin employs 65 people mainly based in Britain, with offices in Farnborough, Hampshire, and the City. It expects to double its headcount in the next 12 months.

Paul Ford, 53, chief executive, said: "This investment demonstrates that the market shares our vision of transforming risk management with data across the entire financial sector."

The company says its system improves financial institutions' ability to manage operational risks. These include errors caused by people, processes or technology andcan be anything from deliberate rogue trading to accidental "fat finger" incidents — issues distinct from credit or market risk that banks are more familiar with.

The system connects financial institutions and allows them to share their risk and control information, such as policies and procedures, so that they can learn from one another.



Taizhou's history stretches back thousands of years, to the Xia and Shang dynasties, and its literary, philosophical and artistic heritage has led to its reputation as southeast China's cultural hotspot. Over the centuries, Taizhou has been home to literary, artistic and cultural masters, including Ke Jiusi, renowned painter and calligrapher of the Yuan dynasty, and the Tang dynasty's Han Shanzi (Hanshan), who is said to have created the first vernacular poetry. The city also gave rise to one of the world's oldest dictionaries of botany, while the Guoqing Temple (above) is believed to be the birthplace of Tiantai, China's first indigenous school of Buddhism.

DRIVING INNOVATION

A clever combination of industrial ingenuity and intelligent eco practices has turned a coastal city into an economic powerhouse

A sleek, modern city on the coast of eastern China, Taizhou might not yet be a familiar name in international commerce, but in recent years it has gained a robust reputation for its industrial manufacturing prowess and the vitality of its private economy. It's fast becoming one of the premier Chinese cities in which to do business, and it combines a rich cultural past with urban planning based on its natural landscape featuring mountains and sea. This is an ideal environment for businesses and ambitious entrepreneurs to flourish.

INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

Over the past 20 years, many industries have sprung up and grown in the city, including healthcare, medicine, motoring, smart home appliances, pumps and intelligent sewing equipment. Through meticulous research and hard work, these companies have achieved strong links around the world, making Taizhou an important part of the global supply chain. The city currently has 69 listed manufacturing companies (up from 23 a decade ago) and 68 national-level industrial bases. To strengthen and develop these companies into a world-class industrial belt, Taizhou is building five big industrial zones in the fields of energy, medicine and healthcare, materials, automobiles and precision manufacturing.

> “Taizhou's economic success story would not have been possible without the innovators and entrepreneurs driving the city forward

EXCITING ENTREPRENEURS

Taizhou's economic success story would not have been possible without the companies, innovators and entrepreneurs driving the city forward. Geely Automobile, founded 25 years ago, recently expanded its presence with an agreement to invest 20 billion yuan (£2.3 billion) in new-energy vehicle production capacity. Facilities will include a production line and industrial park for auto parts, with an estimated annual output of £6.9 billion. Geely is also a key part of the trillion-dollar commercial aerospace market, and continues to innovate in other fields.

Taitian Group Co is another company that has seen huge growth in its two decades of operation in Taizhou. Originally a small factory producing mechanical parts, Taitian now has a 60 per cent share of the domestic market in pneumatic wrenches and also exports its products to more than 80 countries.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Taizhou is a prime example of China's reform and opening-up strategy, which saw overseas trade volume surpass £23 billion in 2021. Trade connections now include shipping routes to Vietnam, New Zealand and the United States, along with freight train routes to Europe. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has helped the city become an industrial powerhouse and strengthened cooperation with RCEP member countries (including Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Malaysia) in areas such as manufacturing, green technology and high-end industrial chains.

A prime example of such close cooperation is Singapore's Mapletree Industrial Park, which, with an investment of around £230 million, aims to attract domestic and overseas production in areas such as motoring, spare parts and advanced precision manufacturing. In recognising the importance of the RCEP, Taizhou will develop a product distribution centre for serving strategic partners, alongside an import trade innovation demonstration area and a cross-border e-commerce pioneer area, as well as a regional financial services agglomeration area.



The future is now: Geely Automobile's intelligent production line (top); Ruyi Bridge in Shenxianju Scenic Area

台州 TAIZHOU

For more information, visit en.zjtz.gov.cn

A FLOURISHING PORT

As a coastal city, Taizhou has unique advantages in developing overseas trade and RCEP cooperation, with several port areas now in operation and major shipping infrastructure and service systems installed. Taizhou's first direct liner route for overseas trade containers, linking nearby Damaiyu port with Hai Phong port in Vietnam, is now in operation. Big ships are regular visitors to Taizhou's new ports, enabling bulk goods to be traded in large quantities.

In 2021, the cargo throughput in Taizhou port reached a high of 551,000 TEUs (shipping containers), up 9.4 per cent year on year.

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Taizhou's industrial sector has been carefully managed to ensure "green growth" underpins the city's development. Technical innovation, production automation and manufacturing digitisation have been developed through sci-tech R&D to ensure green manufacturing processes. Taizhou's air quality, water control, marine waste and soil pollution treatment have seen encouraging results, with a top-three ranking among cities in Zhejiang province for the last seven years.

Regularly ranked one of China's happiest cities, Taizhou's booming economy has come without neglecting environmental concerns or living standards. Instead, the "Made in Taizhou" label has turned the city into a major player, with its products contributing to better lives for consumers around the world.

Migrants replace Covid as Serco money-spinner

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Rupert Soames has signed off from his eight-year tour of duty at Serco with his third profit upgrade in seven months.

What Serco has lost financially from the end of operating the government's much-criticised test-and-trace Covid 19 scheme, it has more than made up with Britain's migrant crisis.

The company, whose work includes running asylum and migrant accommodation, detention and removal services, said: "Strong demand for immigration-related services, one of the reasons for our upgrade to guidance earlier in the year, has continued in the UK."

However, with Serco's trading update reminding investors that the chief executive is standing down — Soames, 63, announced his departure from the company in September — and that next year will not show significant growth, shares in the government contractor added to their 10 per cent slide over the past fortnight, falling 2p, or 1.2 per cent, to just below 156p, valuing the group at about £1.8 billion.

Serco delivers outsourced public services such as running prisons, cleaning and maintaining hospitals and military establishments and operating trains on Merseyside. Once the darling of the stock market and ministers keen to get things off the public books, the company was hit a decade ago when it was discovered cheating the Ministry of Justice and the taxpayer by lying about prisoner escort and offender monitoring contract data. Its share price collapsed and in 2014 Soames was brought in to rescue the business.

During the pandemic Serco's reputation with the government was repaired sufficiently for it to be given the task of operating the pandemic test-and-trace programme. While being associated with the scheme did little for Serco's reputation, the contract proved to be a money-spinner, bringing in tens of millions of pounds.

With that scheme coming to an end, Serco initially had forecast that profits for 2022 would drop by 15 per cent from £229 million in 2021 to £195 million. By May, the company had revised that up to £225 million; in August it pushed it up to £230 million; and yesterday it said that with only a fortnight to go until the end of its financial year, it believed the number would be £235 million, from revenues of £4.5 billion.

Much of that has been a result of the migrant crisis in Britain, plus Serco's joint venture cleaning and maintaining military buildings and armed forces personnel accommodation.

It also made its initial predictions for next year, forecasting a similar outcome for 2023 but with slightly lower margins: £235 million of profits from £4.6 billion of revenues. Some of that will be a result of the £8 million of upfront costs that Serco will have to bear in the opening in the coming months of the new Fosse Way category C rehabilitation and resettlement prison near Leicester.

Soames' trading updates have often been punctuated by rhetorical flourishes. His sign-off was a little more prosaic: "To deliver [these profits] in the midst of such a challenging geopolitical and economic backdrop underlines the strength of our business-to-government platform.

"Customers across the world continue, as they did during the pandemic, to turn to Serco as a trusted and capable partner to help them with the challenges of delivering public services," he said.

Tempus, page 48

Share price



Dismay as small firms' tech support scheme is scrapped

Katie Prescott

Business groups have expressed disappointment over the government's decision to scrap a technology support scheme for small companies.

Help to Grow: Digital was designed to help companies employing fewer than 249 people to gain access to software that would help to make them up to 18 per cent more productive, according to Rishi Sunak, when he was chancellor. It gave eligible businesses a 50 per cent discount on programmes up to a maximum of £5,000, which included customer relationship management, accountancy and ecommerce software, with a website to guide users through various options. However, take-up has been lower than expected.

In a letter seen by The Times, the government said the scheme would close to new applications from February 2 because it "cannot justify the continued cost of the scheme to the taxpayer". It plans to "refocus efforts towards other support mechanisms for small businesses".

Tina McKenzie, policy chairwoman at the Federation of Small Businesses, said: "Turning Help to Grow into Help to Slow — at Christmas time, no less — is a Scrooge move. It has barely been around for a year and although uptake is low, firms should be given the time to reap the benefits instead of having it snatched away during a time of economic crisis. This decision creates a vacuum in public policy technology adoption."

Writing on Twitter, Neil Ross, associate director at techUK, called it "a disappointing decision", and added: "This leaves a big gap in the support available to encourage digitisation and productivity growth."

Critics said that the scheme was a failure and that some software packages on offer were not up to scratch.

The scheme was launched in January "to help businesses use the latest technology to cut costs, save time, reach new customers and be more competitive".

A spokesman for Sage, the accountancy software business, said: "We are concerned that the government's flagship productivity programme hasn't achieved what it set out to. This is a missed opportunity. We need to make sure the government doesn't lose sight of the importance of continuing to incentivise [small businesses] to digitalise".

THE TIMES

Enterprise Network

Lights out

Small businesses are experimenting with ways to reduce energy consumption and save money in the face of rocketing energy prices, providers have said



Precious metals London based Romco Group is the third biggest aluminium recycler in Nigeria and has saved 152,860 cubic metres of waste — 61 Olympic-sized swimming pools full — from landfill

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Emma Powell **Tempus**

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



Price wars are clouding the big picture

CURRYS

Market cap	Half-year loss
£736m	£548m

Costly price wars with rivals fighting to take market share have caused Currys to come unstuck overseas, but the risk of heavy discounting is one that also needs to be managed closer to home.

Guidance for its adjusted pre-tax profits this year has been cut to between £100 million and £125 million, against a previous range of £125 million to £145 million. The retailer is more dependent than ever on Christmas sales after swinging to an adjusted loss of £17 million during the first half of the year.

The electricals chain is battling falling spending from cash-strapped consumers, an impact amplified by the boom in demand for televisions, laptops and games consoles during the pandemic. Its shares have followed suit, sliding almost 75 per cent since the start of this year. But against Currys' own history and relative to the rest of the sector, those shares are not yet in bargain territory.

Adjusted for the cut to profit guidance, the shares trade at eight times forward earnings. Yes, that's a discount to an average multiple of ten recorded since the Dixons/Carphone tie-up, but then the outlook for consumer spending is also a lot worse.

Operations in the Nordic countries and Greece, formerly lucrative markets, are at the centre of Currys' troubles. Rivals that overexpanded in the wake of the pandemic have been selling goods at aggressive discounts. In the hope of maintaining market share, Currys has been drawn into the competition. The result? Like-for-like sales have declined by 6 per cent and margins have suffered even more, almost entirely wiping out profits for that business over the first half of the year.

Currys argues that such discounting is unsustainable. That might be true, but there is no timeline for when it will cease to hinder the group's margins and the effects aren't merely in the shorter term. A 3 per cent operating margin target, cut from 4 per cent earlier in the year, has been pushed back by another 12 months to 2025. How Currys fares over the peak Christmas trading season will determine how well margins in the UK and Ireland business hold up this year.

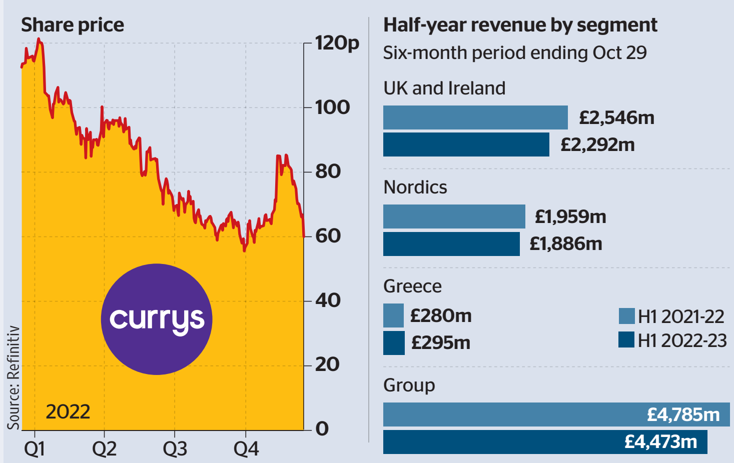
Like-for-like sales have continued to slide in recent months, down 10 per cent year-on-year, yet stock levels have increased. At £1.75 billion, inventory was £170 million higher than at the same point in 2021. The supply chain disruption that sapped stock levels this time last year is one explanation, as is the higher cost of goods. But it leaves Currys at risk of needing to shift more goods at a discount, particularly if Christmas isn't a bumper season.

Offering consumers the chance to buy on tick might be one way of encouraging sales. About 17 per cent of customers bought on credit, ahead of a target of 16 per cent by the end of the next financial year and up from 12.4 per cent last year. The question is whether bad debts pile up; thus far the retailer has "not seen any building problems in the book".

Investing more in stock and the drain of the international business sapped cash generation. The result? A free cash outflow of £86 million and a swing to a net debt position of £105 million, against net cash of £250 million last year. The plan is to get debt below £100 million by the end of April.

The company is 18 months into a £300 million savings plan, which boosted adjusted profits for the UK and Ireland division in recent months, but the likelihood of more margin erosion in overseas markets and the risk of ebbing sales domestically means cost reductions might barely touch the sides for Currys as a whole. The risk of the retailer cutting its guidance again remains high.

Nasty taste



ADVICE Avoid
WHY Declining sales and weaker margins overseas raises the risk the company will miss profit guidance

SERCO

Half-year profit	Dividend yield
£123m	1.6%

The parting note from Rupert Soames, Serco's chief executive, is another bump to profit guidance this year, but his real legacy is turning the outsourcer from a City pariah to one that has firmly convinced the market it has a stable path to increase earnings.

Underlying profits are expected to be about £235 million this year, £5 million higher than previously expected and £40 million up on initial guidance issued this time last year. Generating greater volumes of work out of existing contracts as well as benefiting from big wins in the American and British defence sectors have put the group on track to lift profits year-on-year, despite the remnants of test-and-trace work fading.

Soames has stripped back the focus to government contracts in five sectors — including defence, health and immigration and justice — and the four regions of Britain, the United States, Asia Pacific and the Middle East. The company has been steered away from lossmaking contracts.

The result? It is in a much stronger financial position. The balance sheet was secure enough for dividends to be reinstated at the start of last year, with another rise in the payment to 3.04p forecast for this year. Free cashflow is forecast to be £140 million this year. Net debt remains below a target range of between one and two times adjusted earnings, at a multiple of only 0.8. That leaves room for more acquisitions or special shareholder returns. A £90 million share buyback programme is now complete and the new management team will make a decision on whether to repeat share purchases next year.

Over the past five years, the stock has delivered a total return of almost 65 per cent relative to a negative 6 per cent from the FTSE 250, the mid-cap index of which it is a constituent. The shares are still up almost 12 per cent since the start of this year despite the wider market sell-off. Yet the stock remains inexpensive at just under 12 times forward earnings, a discount to a five-year average multiple of 17. That leaves room for the shares to continue their ascent if Soames' successor can keep the group on course.

ADVICE Buy
WHY Inexpensive considering the improved margins

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bezos adviser for Asos

Asos bolstered its board with the appointment of a former tech adviser to the Amazon chief, Jeff Bezos, as a non-executive director. Wei Gao, who will serve on the online fashion group's audit committee, was previously chief operating officer at Hopin, the events platform, and spent 16 years in senior roles at Amazon. These included vice-president for grocery tech, product and supply chain. In 2019 she was named one of the 50 most powerful women by the National Diversity Council. Shares in Asos fell 24½p, or 4.6 per cent, to 510½p.

Biffa profit before sale

Biffa swung back into profit, shortly before it is set to be taken into private hands in a takeover. The Buckinghamshire-based waste management company reported pre-tax profit for the six months to September 23 of £38.2 million, reversing a loss of £25.6 million a year ago. Revenue grew by 23 per cent to £825.6 million from £671.2 million, boosted by "higher selling prices, strong commodity values and an increased contribution from the Viridor business".

Tax rise deters Harbour

Harbour Energy, Britain's biggest oil and gas producer in the North Sea, has said it will not enter the UK's first exploration licensing round in almost three years as it reviews its investments after an increase in the country's windfall tax on fossil fuel producers. Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, raised the energy profits levy from 25 per cent to 35 per cent in his autumn statement last month, taking the headline rate of tax for companies operating in the North Sea to 75 per cent.

Victory for US regulator

The risk of about 200 Chinese companies, including Alibaba, being removed from US stock exchanges has gone after the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board said it had gained full access to inspect and investigate them. "For the first time in history, we are able to perform full and thorough inspections and investigations to root out potential problems and hold firms accountable to fix them," Erica Williams, head of the accountancy regulator, said.

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	33202.22 (-764.13)
Nasdaq Composite	10810.53 (-360.36)
S&P 500	3895.75 (-99.57)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	28051.70 (-104.51)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	19368.59 (-304.86)
Amsterdam	
AEX Index	707.60 (-23.27)
Sydney	
AO	7390.30 (-48.40)
Frankfurt	
DAX	13986.23 (-473.97)
Singapore	
Straits	3273.75 (-4.82)
Brussels	
BEL20	3714.06 (-41.52)
Paris	
CAC-40	6522.77 (-208.02)

Zurich	
SMI Index	10880.14 (-280.55)
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	3835.70 (-139.56)
London	
FTSE 100	7426.17 (-69.76)
FTSE 250	18893.79 (-144.13)
FTSE 350	4103.01 (-37.48)
FTSE Eurotop 100	3345.49 (-102.27)
FTSE All-Shares	4063.59 (-36.67)
FTSE Non Financials	4975.73 (-40.14)
techMARK 100	6269.07 (-63.07)
Bargains	n/a
US$	1.2173 (-0.0244)
Euro	1.1479 (-0.0151)
£:SDR	0.98 (+0.00)
Exchange Index	80.16 (+0.03)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
CPI	126.69 Nov (2015 = 100)
RPI	358.30 Nov (Jan 1987 = 100)
RPIX	290.10 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45 (+27.75)

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Dec 22	105.30	105.51	105.30	105.67	103	72049
	Mar 23	103.97	105.29	103.97	104.83	215418	368554
3-Mth Sterling	Dec 22	98.820	98.825	98.790	98.806	7310	347378
	Mar 23	98.785	98.795	98.755	98.771	8310	229855
	Jun 23						
	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
3-Mth Euribor	Dec 22	97.855	97.920	97.855	97.900	355011	697363
	Mar 23	97.165	97.205	97.000	97.065	341266	519255
	Jun 23	96.980	97.025	96.740	96.790	335553	489833
	Sep 23	96.970	97.010	96.710	96.770	268809	407744
	Dec 23	97.040	97.080	96.795	96.850	263303	385281
3-Mth Euroswiss	Dec 22	100.61	100.62	100.59	100.62	488	22748
	Mar 23						
	Jun 23						
	Sep 23						
FTSE100	Dec 22	7490.0	7499.5	7410.0	7424.5	107892	167737
	Mar 23	7490.0	7500.0	7408.0	7420.0	101999	529889
FTSEurofirst 80	Dec 22				5214.5		
	Mar 23				5232.5		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 7.30pm)

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	82.08	-1.28
BFOE(Feb)	81.30	-1.40
BFOE(Mar)	81.46	-1.29
WTI(Feb)	76.15	-1.13
WTI(Mar)	76.12	-1.19

Products ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Unld	727.00	730.00	-6.00
Gasoil EEC	908.25	909.25	-0.50
3.5 Fuel Oil	333.25	333.25	-12.75
Naphtha	598.00	600.00	-39.00

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Jan	924.00-923.75	Apr	853.50-848.00
Feb	907.00-906.50	May	831.75-831.25
Mar	881.75-881.00		Volume: 599019

Brent (9.00pm)

Feb	81.41-81.39	May	80.83-80.79
Mar	81.47-81.45	Jun	80.51-80.49
Apr	81.12-81.09		Volume: 1747077

LIFFE

Cocoa

Mar	1974-1973	May	1888-1789
May	1905-1901	Jul	1880-1772
Jul	1880-1869	Sep	1989-1767
Sep	1866-1850		
Dec	1944-1832		
Mar	1821-1795		Volume: 71242

RobustaCoffee

Jan	1952-1944	Sep	1839-1795
Mar	1882-1879	Nov	2025-1785
May	1858-1845		
Jul	1848-1805		Volume: 22208

White Sugar (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	496.50-494.70
		Dec	491.20-489.00
Mar	544.30-543.40	Mar	484.20-482.10
May	531.90-528.90	May	475.20-471.00
Aug	513.20-510.20		Volume: 66612

We're all going on a summer holiday, predicts JP Morgan



Tom Howard Market report

To judge by the plight of travel stocks for most of this year, the consensus in the City seems to be that not many of us will be jetting off in 2023. Spending power will be dented by soaring energy bills and fewer people will have the confidence to splash out on lavish holidays with the economy staring down the barrel of what could be a lengthy recession.

JP Morgan thinks the pessimism may prove unfounded, though. After two years of lockdowns, its team of travel analysts think we will look to get away come what may next year. Demand, they argue, will fall back from this year's "very exceptional" levels, but not by as much as some would expect.

The pandemic reminded people how much they like their overseas holiday, so much so that there is now a "propensity for travel to be prioritised". Because of that optimism, travel shares were among the standout performers on the stock market. **International Consolidated Airlines Group**, the British Airways owner, was the top riser in the FTSE 100 as it gained 2¾p, or 2.1 per cent, to 134p, while **easyJet**, the budget airline, flew almost 4p, or 1.1 per cent higher, to 367p.

They were not exactly huge moves, but it was about as good as it got. Of Britain's 350 biggest companies, three quarters ended the day in the red as traders digested rises in global interest rates and concluded that central bankers would not stop increasing rates soon.

The FTSE 100 endured its worst session since October as it shed another 69.76 points, or 0.9 per cent, to 7,426.17. The more UK-biased FTSE 250 index slipped 144.13 points, or 0.8 per cent, to 18,893.79. However, housebuilders, which have been whacked by the jump in mortgage rates and general uncertainty in recent weeks, enjoyed some relief. Economists suggested that, with no surprises in the Bank of England's latest policy move, fixed-rate mortgages should continue to come down in the new year after jumping wildly after the mini-budget. Shares in **Redrow** climbed 11¼p, or 2.5 per cent, to 468¼p; **Vistry**, which owns the Bovis Homes brand, rose 11½p, or 1.9 per cent, to 627½p; and **Bellway** added 34½p, or 1.8 per cent, to £19.51. All three of those stocks are still down by a third or more in 2022.

National Express, the coach operator, was stuck in reverse gear after Alex Paterson, an analyst at Peel Hunt, cut his forecasts amid bus driver wage pressures in both the United States and Britain. "Higher wage settlements are impacting margins in the UK and North America," he said. The stock, which had been sold off earlier in the month, slipped a further 10p, or 6.5 per cent, to 143¾p.

Retailers were under the cosh as **Currys** became the latest to warn that consumers are tightening their pursestrings owing to the cost of living squeeze. Aside from Currys, which fell 3¾p, or 5.7 per cent, to 61½p, **Asos**, the online fashion retailer, was the heaviest faller, declining 24½p, or 4.6 per cent, to 510½p.

Among the smaller stocks, **Carclo**, a plastics manufacturer that makes products such as syringes and asthma inhalers, lost almost a quarter of its value, closing 3½p, or 22.7 per cent, down at 11½p. It confirmed the cancellation of a contract to make components for a laboratory Covid test, which meant its second-half profits woukld be "materially lower than previous expectations".

There was better news for **PetroTal**, which rose 2¼p, or 6.2 per cent, to 39½p after local protestors blocking a river near its oilwell in Peru removed the barricade, letting its products out.

Wall Street report

A combination of lower retail sales and the Federal Reserve's continued aggressive stance of rates, which could stay higher for longer, pushed indices sharply lower. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 764.13 points, or 2.3 per cent, to 33,202.22.

Looking into the crystal ball

'Tis the season of bankers' Christmas lunches, at which many will share a bottle of wine and will try to pick the best and worst stocks in 2023.

According to Robert Buckland, Citigroup's veteran equity strategist, most will opt for contrarian trades, tipping this year's losers as next year's winners and vice versa.

"Everyone picks their bull from the disasters of the previous year, their bear from the hero stocks," he said.

In most years, Buckland found that this strategy did not work. For example, it should have been a good call to back Chinese stocks and to bet against the US dollar this year. We all know what happened there.

It did get some things right, though. Predicting a drop in technology shares, after a blazing run in 2021, would have been prescient, as would buying boring defensive stocks.

Despite his scepticism, Buckland has picked shares fitting that strategy. He says buy equities — growth and cyclical stocks — sell shares in oil and defensive companies, and bet on the dollar falling.

"For these trades to progress further, they would probably need inflation to roll over, rates to peak and a soft landing for the global economy. Peace in eastern Europe would also help. We think 2023 will be messier than that," he said.



Bankers hope to toast their own success with their picks for 2023

CARINA JOHANSEN/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



'We want our boss back with Tesla'

Tesla investors have expressed frustration over Elon Musk's sale of a further tranche of shares in the electric car company, amid growing concerns that the billionaire is focusing his attention on his $44 billion acquisition of Twitter to the detriment of his other business interests (Katie Prescott writes).

Regulatory filings showed that Musk had dumped 22 million shares in Tesla this week for $3.6 billion, bringing his total sales to almost $40 billion over the past year.

In August Musk said he was selling some of his holding to fund the Twitter deal and "to avoid an emergency sale of Tesla stock". Last month, shortly after the purchase of Twitter, Musk sold 19.5 million shares of Tesla worth $3.95 billion.

Ross Gerber, a shareholder, tweeted on Wednesday: "We want our CEO back …" and "Tesla should announce a buyback immediately and stop the dilution from Elon's sales".

Since Musk, 51, made an offer for Twitter on April 14, the Tesla share price has fallen by more than 50 per cent. Aside from its co-founder's interest in the social media business, Tesla has struggled with vehicle recalls and worries that the economic downturn will hit car sales.

Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, said: "Musk uses Tesla as his own ATM machine to keep funding the red ink at Twitter, which gets worse by the day as more advertisers flee the platform." Shares in Tesla closed up 87 cents, or 0.6 cent, at $157.67, last night.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Aston Martin Lagonda Strikes three-month high	4.5%
Clarkson JP Morgan analysts upgrade stock	3.8%
Octopus Renewables Infra Trust Completes building of French wind farm	3.2%
Drax Profits to be slightly better than expected	3.1%
Redrow Wider housebuilding sector rises	2.5%
Syncona Eases back from three-month high	-5.7%
Currys Disappointing half-year results	-5.7%
Molten Ventures Higher interest rates bad news for technology stocks	-5.8%
National Express Analysts warn of wage pressures	-6.5%
Helios Towers Down 14 per cent in two days	-7.0%

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Jan	287.25	Mar	242.50	May	238.75
Jul	unq	Nov	227.50	Volume: 671	

London Metal Exchange

(Official)

	Cash	3mth	Dec 22
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	8382.0-8383.0	8420.0-8422.0	8410.0-8420.0
Lead ($/tonne)	2132.0-2133.0	2142.0-2144.0	2147.0-2152.0
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	3233.0-3235.0	3213.0-3215.0	3138.0-3143.0
Alum Hi Gde ($/tonne)	2395.0-2396.0	2428.0-2430.0	2512.0-2517.0
Nickel ($/tonne)	28575.0-28625.0	28800.0-28850.0	29610.0-29660.0
Tin ($/tonne) (15mth)	23550.0-23650.0	23500.0-23550.0	22545.0-22595.0

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Wednesday.

Bullion: Open $1807.34

Close $1779.12-1779.31 High $1807.34

Low $1774.26

AM $1808.20 **PM** $1808.05

Krugerrand $1760.00-2856.00 (£1443.92-2343.10)

Platinum $1011.80 (£830.09)

Silver $23.17 (£19.01)

Palladium $1821.08 (£1494.04)

European money deposits %

Currency	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	3.49	3.79	4.30	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 3.50 ECB Refi 2.00 US Fed Fd 4.25-4.50

Halifax Mortgage Rate 5.74

Treasury Bills (Dis) Buy: 1 mth 2.720; 3 mth 3.390. Sell: 1 mth 2.500; 3 mth 2.850

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Interbank Rates	3.4878	0.0000	3.7942	4.2955	0.0000
Eurodollar Deps	4.35-4.41	4.70-4.95	4.69-4.94	4.88-5.13	5.39-5.56

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.5248-8.6544	8.5450-8.5462	144ds	409ds
Euro	1.1640-1.1465	1.1489-1.1489	14pr	38pr
Montreal	1.6617-1.6826	1.6647-1.6649	10pr	22pr
New York	1.2175-1.2424	1.2189-1.2189	13pr	30pr
Oslo	11.993-12.132	12.035-12.038	80ds	192ds
Stockholm	12.559-12.680	12.628-12.631	325ds	769ds
Tokyo	167.81-168.83	168.11-168.12	53ds	164ds
Zurich	1.1331-1.1490	1.1336-1.1337	33ds	93ds

Premium = pr Discount = ds

Dollar rates

Australia	1.4943-1.4945
Canada	1.3655-1.3656
Denmark	7.0094-7.0099
Euro	0.9426-0.9426
Hong Kong	7.7766-7.7771
Japan	137.92-137.93
Malaysia	4.4040-4.4150
Norway	9.8704-9.8753
Singapore	1.3606-1.3608
Sweden	10.358-10.360
Switzerland	0.9300-0.9301

Other Sterling

Argentina peso	210.26-210.27
Australia dollar	1.8214-1.8216
Bahrain dinar	0.4559-0.4628
Brazil real	6.4616-6.4653
Euro	1.1488-1.1490
Hong Kong dollar	9.4823-9.4833
India rupee	101.01-101.01
Indonesia rupiah	19080-19088
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3726-0.3749
Malaysia ringgit	5.4106-5.4241
New Zealand dollar	1.9255-1.9259
Singapore dollar	1.6587-1.6590
S Africa rand	21.377-21.387
U A E dirham	4.4851-4.4875

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia $	1.817	+0.01
Canada $	1.664	-0.02
Denmark Kr	8.534	-0.13
Euro €	1.147	-0.02
Hong Kong $	9.500	-0.14
Hungary	467.305	-4.47
Indonesia	19081.568	-262.53
Israel Shk	4.205	-0.01
Japan Yen	168.047	+0.76
New Zealand $	1.919	
Norway Kr	12.017	-0.09
Poland	5.385	-0.07
Russia	79.052	-1.43
S Africa Rd	21.310	-0.01
Sweden Kr	12.596	-0.06
Switzerland Fr	1.135	-0.01
Turkey Lira	22.774	-0.34
USA $	1.222	-0.02

Rates supplied by Morningstar

MORNINGSTAR® Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by Morningstar or this publication


On tonight's show
Anton Ferdinand
Ian Holloway
Simon Brodkin
Samantha Fox
FOOTBALL BLOODY HELL!
Andy Goldstein takes on the Qatar World Cup with big name guests on his hilarious football chat show, Football Bloody Hell!
TONIGHT FROM 9PM
TALK TV
WATCH HERE:
Freeview 237
sky 522
Virgin media 606
App | Talk.TV
YouTube

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gilt Yield A ‡@	206.01	...	+0.27	...
Strategic Bond Fund ‡@	158.70	...	-0.14	2.63
UK Corp Bond C ‡@	104.79	...	-0.78	...
UK Eqty C ‡@	6317.26	...	-14.91	3.28
UK Eqty Inc A ‡@	321.26	...	+0.06	4.60
UK Gwth A ‡@	7929.07	...	-4.38	...
UK Index A Inc ‡@	1423.81	...	-5.83	3.01
UK Mid Cap A ‡@	4654.61	...	-11.35	0.07

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Capital R Acc ‡@	2120.51	...	-5.20	...
Euro Opps R Acc ‡@	91.26	...	-0.48	...
Euro Opps R Inc ‡@	85.36	...	-0.46	...
European Growth R Acc ‡@	368.30	...	-0.68	2.11
Global Energy R Acc ‡@	42.15	...	-0.12	1.10
Global Growth R Acc ‡@	333.39	...	-0.93	...
Global Income R Acc ‡@	153.52	...	-1.31	4.11
Global Income R Inc ‡@	97.70	...	-0.83	4.26
Global Select R Acc ‡@	148.34	...	-1.34	...
High Income R Inc ‡@	62.31	...	+0.02	4.38
Income R Acc ‡@	500.47	...	-0.66	3.91
Income R Inc ‡@	219.40	...	-0.29	4.03
Monthly Dist R Inc ‡@	64.95	...	-0.05	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	83.43	...	-0.27	...
Strategic Bond R M Acc ‡@	95.97	...	+0.21	2.99
Strategic Bond R M Inc ‡@	50.89	...	+0.11	3.05
Strategic Bond R Q Acc ‡@	95.80	...	+0.21	3.16
Strategic Bond R Q Inc ‡@	50.65	...	+0.11	3.21
UK Growth R Acc ‡@	653.64	...	-3.30	1.21
UK Smaller Cos R Acc ‡@	1829.60	...	+8.59	0.88
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡@	655.45	...	-3.18	1.07

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients: 0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc ‡@	572.40	...	-2.70	...
Gilt Acc @	201.30	211.80	+0.10	1.08
Gilt Inc @	74.35	78.24	-0.39	1.09
Health Acc ‡@	2978.00	...	-8.00	...
Jap Smlr Co Ac @	62.56	66.09	-0.19	0.30
Managed Inc ‡@	138.30	...	...	4.20
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	237.20	...	-0.20	...
UK Growth Inc ‡@	217.90	...	...	0.64
UK Select Opps Inc ‡@	1898.00	...	-4.00	1.04
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡@	265.70	...	+0.50	0.04

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc ‡@	2101.00	...	+6.00	...
Gen Inc ‡@	1079.00	...	-2.00	...

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Acc A ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
Extra Inc Inc B ‡@	86.74	...	+0.24	1.16
Global Gwth Acc R ‡@	288.10	...	+4.10	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡@	162.30	...	+2.20	1.51
Pac Gwth Acc A ‡@	479.80	...	-17.60	2.30

CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Gwth ‡@	197.30	...	-1.50	...
Sus Leaders ‡@	759.40	...	-2.30	1.03
UK Growth ‡@	611.00	...	-1.80	2.01
UK Income ‡@	209.20	...	+0.30	...

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD
0870 606 6402

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Beacon Inv ‡	84.88	...	+0.35	0.01

Dealing: 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	3538.51	...	+5.49	0.87

EDENTREE INV MGMT LTD
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond ‡	86.97	...	+0.39	3.81
Resp & Sust Eurp Eq ‡	302.60	...	-0.80	...
Resp & Sust Glbl Eq ‡	310.90	...	-0.10	0.08
Resp & Sust Mgd Income ‡	120.50	...	...	4.93
Resp & Sust UK Eq ‡	217.00	...	-0.70	0.97
Resp & Sust UK Equity Opps ‡	271.10	...	-0.60	0.88

F & C FUND MANAGEMENT LTD (OEICS)
Enqs: 0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 601 6083
Share Class 1 - Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bd ‡@	49.99	...	-0.31	1.57
Emerging Mkts ‡@	116.50	...	-0.50	...
Euro Gwth & Inc 1 ‡@	1130.00	...	-7.00	...
Extra Inc Bond ‡@	43.65	...	+0.05	1.85
FTSE All-Shr Track ‡@	415.50	...	-1.30	3.02
Global Gwth SC1 ‡@	304.70	...	-1.50	...
High Inc Trst @	11.11	11.74	...	5.73
Max Inc Bond ‡@	43.05	...	+0.01	3.11
Multi Man Caut ‡@	70.41	...	...	3.18
Multi Man Distr ‡@	60.44	...	...	3.37
North Amer ‡@	813.80	...	-1.00	...
Pacific Gwth ‡@	485.90	...	-4.30	...
Strategic Bd ‡@	196.30	...	+0.30	1.80
UK Equity ‡@	3386.00	...	+2.00	...
UK Gwth & Inc Acc 1 ‡@	658.50	...	...	...
UK Gwth & Inc Dist ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
UK Smaller Cos ‡@	1013.00	...	+2.00	0.19

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts 0800 414161 Broker Dlgs 0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec Sits ‡@	2294.00	...	-13.00	...
American ‡@	4899.00	...	-4.00	...
Euro Opps ‡@	550.40	...	+5.30	...
European ‡@	3280.00	...	+27.00	0.32
Extra Income ‡@	22.59	...	-0.04	5.10
Glob Spec Sits ‡@	5324.00	...	+5.00	...
Global Focus ‡@	2848.00	...	+6.00	...
International ‡@	149.50	...	+0.20	0.08
Japan ‡@	526.90	...	+10.20	0.51
Moneybldr Bal ‡@	43.73	...	-0.09	...
Moneybldr Glob	327.60	327.60	-0.10	...
Moneybldr Gwth ‡@	76.12	...	-0.95	2.97
Moneybldr Inc ‡@	29.29	...	-0.04	4.36
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡@	125.61	...	+0.34	2.89
Special Sits ‡@	4386.00	...	+11.00	...
Wealthbuilder	69.75	72.18	+0.53	0.44

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class `C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡@	32.38	...	+0.18	...
Ethical ‡@	107.40	...	-0.40	...
European ‡@	104.90	...	-0.40	1.90
Far Eastern ‡	110.90	...	-1.20	1.79
Fund of Inv Tst ‡@	132.10	...	-2.10	0.26
Intl Gwth ‡	121.20	...	-0.40	...
Japanese ‡	65.79	...	-0.62	...
North Amer ‡	144.40	...	-0.20	...
Smaller Cos ‡	105.50	...	+1.20	0.80
Special Sits ‡@	46.82	...	-0.04	...
UK Equity Inc ‡@	87.68	...	-0.21	...
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡@	67.74	...	-0.25	2.68
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡@	76.49	...	-0.28	2.54
UK Growth ‡@	79.18	...	-0.19	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD
Enq: 0845 745 6123 Dlg: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡@	893.61	...	+11.79	...
Amer Ind Inc ‡@	720.60	...	+9.55	...
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	1114.53	...	+2.25	2.34
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	712.09	...	+1.44	2.42
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡@	269.24	...	+0.16	3.14
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡@	122.31	...	+0.07	3.22
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡@	280.07	...	+2.49	2.28
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡@	173.06	...	+1.54	2.27
FTSE All-S Acc ‡@	685.76	...	+1.43	3.16
FTSE All-S Inc ‡@	346.69	...	+0.72	3.24
Jap Ind Acc ‡@	134.93	...	-0.29	1.97
Jap Ind Inc ‡@	105.16	...	-0.23	2.30
Pac Ind Acc ‡@	488.89	...	-0.24	2.59
Pac Ind Inc ‡@	307.68	...	-0.15	2.66

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced Acc ‡@	237.67	...	+0.51	0.59
Balanced Inc ‡@	151.95	...	-0.14	...
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	263.62	...	-0.80	4.79
Corp Bd Inc ‡@	103.10	...	-0.31	5.15
Gilt & Fd Int Acc ‡@	497.78	...	+1.62	1.19
Gilt & Fd Int Inc ‡@	74.17	...	+0.24	1.58
Income Acc ‡@	687.23	...	+2.31	4.28
Income Inc ‡@	287.40	...	+0.96	4.42
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.41	...	+0.77	3.21
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	126.72	...	+0.04	...
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	140.46	...	+0.42	4.15
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inc ‡@	63.19	...	+0.18	4.29
UK Gth & Inc Acc ‡@	140.46	...	+0.42	4.15
UK Gth & Inc Inc ‡@	63.19	...	+0.18	4.29

HSBC Specialist Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Acc ‡@	893.61	...	+11.79	...
American Index Retail Inc ‡@	720.60	...	+9.55	...
Asian Gth Acc ‡@	147.77	...	-0.07	...
Asian Gth Inc ‡@	130.99	...	-0.06	...
Chinese Eq Acc ‡@	513.81	...	+0.27	0.40
Chinese Eq Inc ‡@	434.76	...	+0.22	0.34
Euro Gth Acc ‡@	973.97	...	+4.05	...
Euro Gth Inc ‡@	817.05	...	+3.39	...

IGNIS ASSET MGMT
Dlg: 0141 222 8282

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Gth Inc @	322.55	340.42	-3.34	...
Balanced Growth @	262.17	276.69	-0.93	1.52
Balanced Growth Acc @	393.13	414.92	-1.40	1.49
Corporate Bond ‡@	99.69	...	-0.89	4.77
European Growth @	403.88	426.26	-3.57	...
European Growth Acc @	475.71	502.07	-4.21	...
Glob Gwth @	331.53	349.90	-3.09	0.12
Higher Yield @	83.98	88.64	-0.29	4.43
Higher Yield Acc @	275.04	290.28	-0.92	4.32
Japan @	49.06	51.78	-0.03	...
Managed @	130.89	138.15	-0.06	0.66
Managed Trust @	71.96	76.96	+0.17	...
Mngd Pfolio Inc @	95.54	100.84	-0.11	...
Pacific Grth @	498.71	526.34	-2.81	1.34
Smaller Comp @	756.24	798.14	+1.64	...
Smaller Cos @	628.94	663.79	+1.36	0.21

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FDS MANAGEMENT LTD
Client Servs: 0207 163 4000
Insight Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Well Bldr Bal Acc ‡@	96.05	...	-0.32	...
Well Bldr Gwth Acc ‡@	93.79	...	-0.36	...

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling: 0800 085 8571 Inv Serv: 0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv: 0800 028 2121
INVESCO Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Str Inc N/Trl ‡@	323.57	...	-0.12	7.05

INVESCO PERPETUAL Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Childrens Acc ‡@	440.73	...	+0.52	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	197.48	...	+0.92	1.24
High Income Inc ‡@	312.92	...	-0.66	3.22
Income & Grth Inc ‡@	407.30	...	-0.22	1.68
Income Inc ‡@	1227.23	...	-2.85	3.48
Money Acc ‡@	91.71	...	+0.02	0.47
Monthly Inc Plus Inc ‡@	92.55	...	+0.19	...
UK Aggressive Inc ‡@	154.28	...	-0.24	3.15
UK Growth Acc ‡@	857.46	...	-2.77	...
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡@	1341.92	...	+6.07	0.34
UK Sml Cos Gwth ‡@	82.54	...	+0.04	...

INVESTEC FUND MGRS
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series i,ii,iii, & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡@	626.05	...	-7.98	...
Asia ex Japan A Acc ‡@	733.63	...	+4.86	...
Capital Accumulator A Acc ‡@	231.48	...	-3.81	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡@	376.94	...	-0.34	...
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡@	238.07	...	-0.21	...
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡@	131.25	...	-0.37	0.61
Diversified Growth A Inc ‡@	138.98	...	-0.40	...
Diversified Income A Acc ‡@	316.63	...	-0.24	...
Diversified Income A Inc ‡@	67.95	...	-0.05	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡@	111.28	...	+0.03	4.34
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc Gross ‡@	125.82	...	+0.20	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡@	64.79	...	+0.02	6.29
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡@	146.14	...	+0.28	...
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Acc ‡@	176.38	...	+0.62	4.52
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Inc ‡@	69.59	...	+0.24	4.78
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt Gross I Acc ‡@	220.49	...	-0.05	...
Enhanced Natural Resources A Acc ‡@	134.24	...	-1.25	...
Global Bond A Acc ‡@	139.30	...	+4.03	0.82
Global Bond A Inc ‡@	109.33	...	+3.00	0.82
Global Bond I Gross Inc ‡@	1167.00	...	+29.78	1.25
Global Dynamic A Acc ‡@	193.61	...	+1.95	0.47
Global Energy A Acc ‡@	170.97	...	-1.14	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡@	230.81	...	-1.88	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡@	301.62	...	-1.44	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡@	1161.10	...	+1.04	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡@	181.73	...	-3.39	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡@	299.47	...	-2.06	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡@	231.64	...	-1.59	...
Managed Growth A Acc ‡@	289.92	...	-0.07	...
Monthly High Income A Acc ‡@	243.45	...	+0.43	3.54
Monthly High Income A Inc ‡@	63.17	...	+0.01	5.01
Multi-Asset Protector A Acc ‡@	166.21	...	-0.18	...
Strategic Bond A Acc ‡@	244.54	...	+0.19	...
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	119.47	...	+0.09	...
Target Return A Acc ‡@	102.03	...	+0.44	0.82
Target Return A Inc ‡@	87.63	...	+0.01	0.87
UK Alpha A Acc ‡@	2526.91	...	-7.41	2.08
UK Blue Chip A Acc ‡@	770.11	...	+3.15	...
UK Smaller Companies A Acc ‡@	4600.19	...	-6.37	...
UK Smaller Companies A Inc ‡@	4131.80	...	+12.04	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡@	1247.18	...	-6.20	1.74
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡@	447.08	...	-2.22	1.78

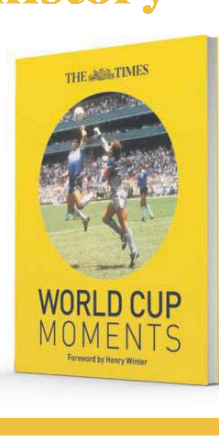
For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEICS)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investors Serv: 0800 832 832 Dlng: 0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stks Credit A Inc ‡@	115.20	...	+0.70	1.75
Asian Div Inc U Trst Inc ‡@	79.09	...	-0.75	5.79
Cautious Man Fd A Acc ‡@	278.60	...	+0.60	...
Cautious Man Fd A Inc ‡@	138.20	...	+0.20	...
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡@	1200.00	...	-8.00	...
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	189.90	...	-1.40	...
Erpn Grth Fund A Acc ‡@	283.70	...	-1.10	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	2124.00	...	-11.00	1.25
Fix Int Mnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡@	28.84	...	-0.01	5.11
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡@	4305.00	...	-42.00	...

100 of the most iconic moments from World Cup history

Pairing epic sports photography with articles from The Times and The Sunday Times archive.



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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Equity Income A Inc ‡@	65.29	...	-0.01	3.32
Global Tech A Acc ‡@	2693.00	...	-9.00	...
Instl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡@	111.67	...	+0.27	2.91
M-Asset Abs Ret A Acc ‡@	160.80	...	+0.20	...
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡@	250.90	...	+0.70	...
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡@	145.30	...	+0.30	2.60
M-Man Inc Grth Fd A Acc ‡@	185.60	...	+0.40	...
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡@	205.00	...	+1.30	1.45
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡@	56.25	...	+0.34	1.46
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	106.10	...	-0.10	3.37
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡@	165.20	...	...	...
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡@	134.80	...	...	1.16
UK Irsh Sm Co Fd A Acc ‡@	742.50	...	-1.70	...
UK Property A Acc @	264.95	278.15	+0.01	2.63
UK Property A Inc @	105.80	111.07	...	2.68
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡@	1618.00	...	-18.00	...

JP MORGAN ASSET MGMT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Asia A Acc ‡@	259.00	...	+2.20	...
Emerging Mkts ‡@	261.50	...	+3.00	...
Eur Dyn (ex-UK) A Acc ‡@	270.30	...	+4.70	0.47
Euro Smllr Cos ‡@	864.00	...	+17.40	...
Europe A Acc ‡@	1734.00	...	+35.00	1.35
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Acc ‡@	117.30	...	+1.10	5.30
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Inc ‡@	30.89	...	+0.29	5.45
Gl ex-UK Bd A Acc ‡@	257.40	...	-0.70	...
Gl ex-UK Bd A Inc ‡@	196.80	...	-0.50	...
Glb Fins A Acc ‡@	1077.00	...	+1.00	1.03
Global A Acc ‡@	2049.00	...	+11.00	...
Multi-Man Tst A Acc ‡@	1268.00	...	+16.00	...
Multi-Man Tst A Inc ‡@	1127.00	...	+15.00	...
Nat Resources ‡@	951.20	...	+17.30	...
New Europe A ‡@	155.70	...	+12.00	2.11
Portfolio ‡@	295.60	...	+0.40	0.98
Stg Corp Bd A Acc ‡@	85.59	...	-0.13	1.14
Stg Corp Bd A Inc ‡@	48.30	...	-0.08	1.14
UK Act 350 A Acc ‡@	199.00	...	-2.20	...
UK Dynamic Acc ‡@	206.70	...	+4.30	...
UK Dynamic Inc ‡@	148.20	...	+3.10	...
UK Equity A Acc ‡@	401.90	...	+0.60	3.45
UK Equity A Inc ‡@	46.44	...	+0.07	3.49
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Acc ‡@	167.10	...	-0.20	...
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Inc ‡@	90.29	...	-0.48	...
UK Higher Inc A Acc ‡@	1132.00	...	+7.00	...
UK Higher Inc A Inc ‡	531.30	...	+2.00	...
UK Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	563.30	...	+7.00	0.34
UK Str Eq Inc A Acc ‡@	197.90	...	+3.50	...
UK Str Eq Inc A Inc ‡@	100.50	...	+1.77	...
US A Acc ‡@	1036.00	...	+25.00	...
US Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	976.20	...	+14.00	...

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Absolute Return ‡@	32.51	...	-0.04	0.11
Distribution and Growth ‡@	93.88	...	-0.46	2.09
Emg Euro Opps ‡@	145.34	...	-31.23	...
Euro Special Sits ‡@	427.83	...	-2.63	...
European ‡@	2733.16	...	-12.51	...
Financial Opps ‡@	685.49	...	-1.54	0.20
Income Trust ‡@	494.95	...	-1.85	4.07
Merlin Bal (Acc) ‡@	225.99	...	+2.10	2.09
Merlin Gwth (Acc) ‡	521.30	...	+2.69	...
Merlin Inc (Acc) ‡@	335.36	...	+1.21	2.65
Merlin Wwide (Inc) ‡	366.74	...	+0.70	...
UK Growth ‡@	247.93	...	+0.16	...
UK Special Sits (Inc) ‡@	196.72	...	-0.76	2.02

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Acc @	2616.00	2639.00	-8.00	2.12
Equity Dist @	893.80	902.00	-2.70	2.15
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	494.20	...	-1.70	2.32
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	323.80	...	-1.10	2.37
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	131.30	...	+1.20	1.92
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	61.69	...	+0.59	1.94
Glob Gwth Acc @	243.90	243.90	-1.30	...
Glob Health Acc ‡@	112.30	...	-0.10	0.66
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	82.88	...	-0.95	0.09
Gwth Tst Acc @	106.00	106.50	-1.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	122.00	...	-0.30	5.37
Japan Ind Acc ‡@	66.61	...	-0.59	1.79
Pacific Ind Acc ‡@	196.20	...	-1.60	3.00
UK 100 Ind Acc @	180.90	180.90	+0.90	3.19
UK Active Opps Acc @	249.90	252.90	-0.10	...
UK Index Acc ‡@	335.90	...	-1.00	3.09
UK Index Dist ‡@	161.80	...	-0.50	3.17
US Ind Acc ‡@	787.20	...	-8.80	0.71
Worldwide Acc ‡@	329.30	...	-1.00	0.74

M & G SECURITIES
Enq: 0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1460.16	...	-2.80	...

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Smlr Cos Acc ‡	525.29	...	-3.39	...
Euro Smlr Cos Inc ‡	462.50	...	-3.00	0.69

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	689.65	...	-0.32	...
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	78.54	...	+0.95	1.42
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.64	...	...	5.80
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	116.40	...	+3.42	...
Index Trckr Inc ‡	73.85	...	-0.23	3.60
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	24.69	...	+0.02	...
UK Select A Inc ‡	2711.83	...	-0.09	2.31

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	34.03	...	+0.21	3.23
Dividend Inc ‡	53.31	...	-0.16	...
Recovery A Inc ‡	105.71	...	-0.26	3.01
Sml Cos Inc ‡	344.27	...	+0.31	2.07

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	135.11	...	-0.67	2.65

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income	87.83	87.83	+0.39	4.63
High Income Acc	243.20	243.20	+1.00	4.31
UK 100 Comp Acc @	446.80	446.80	-0.40	3.10
UK 100 Cos @	221.30	221.30	-0.20	3.18
UK Select Pflo @	326.50	326.50	-0.50	3.15
UK Selection Port Acc @	675.60	675.60	-1.10	1.37
Worldwide Mgd Acc @	924.80	924.80	+1.00	1.03
Wwide Mgd @	544.00	544.00	+0.60	1.04

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD
Enquires: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Dev Opp Fund F Acc ‡@	755.44	...	-10.39	...
Dev Opp Fund I Acc ‡@	751.85	...	-10.34	...
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡@	916.96	...	-1.83	5.53
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡@	857.77	...	-1.71	5.73
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡@	915.86	...	-1.83	5.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡@	856.59	...	-1.71	5.75
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡@	926.61	...	-1.97	1.24
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡@	912.85	...	-1.94	1.25
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡@	925.48	...	-1.97	1.17
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡@	912.62	...	-1.94	1.18
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund F Inc ‡@	1291.20	...	-8.33	4.27
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Acc ‡@	1769.80	...	-11.43	4.23
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Inc ‡@	1382.83	...	-8.93	4.35
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1527.02	...	-16.99	1.04
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	13254.91	...	-94.64	...
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	1462.83	...	-16.28	1.05
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	3642.26	...	-26.01	0.96
Glob Ins Fund F Acc ‡@	489.03	...	-6.78	...
Glob Ins Fund F Inc ‡@	489.03	...	-6.78	...
Glob Ins Fund I Acc ‡@	487.05	...	-6.76	...
Glob Ins Fund I Inc ‡@	487.05	...	-6.76	...
Glob Sust Fund F Acc (PH) ‡@	1118.18	...	-14.59	0.99
Glob Sust Fund F Inc ‡@	1203.00	...	-10.86	0.92
Glob Sust Fund I Acc ‡@	1217.72	...	-10.99	...
Glob Sust Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1117.69	...	-14.59	0.78
Glob Sustain Fund F Acc ‡@	1223.84	...	-11.05	0.91
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡@	119.32	...	+0.71	3.07
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡@	94.77	...	+0.57	3.12
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡@	2538.35	...	+15.19	...
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡@	1346.54	...	+8.06	3.47
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Acc ‡@	923.52	...	+0.46	2.22
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Inc ‡@	892.74	...	+0.44	2.25
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Acc ‡@	919.81	...	+0.46	2.01
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Inc ‡@	892.34	...	+0.44	2.04
US Adv F F Acc ‡@	1340.83	...	-19.74	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡@	756.33	...	-14.81	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡@	1427.33	...	-21.03	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡@	792.96	...	-15.53	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Pfolio Inc ‡@	110.50	...	+0.40	...
Bal Port Gwth Acc ‡@	227.60	...	+0.40	1.20
Equity Inc Inc ‡@	196.30	...	+0.80	5.46
N&P UK Gwth Inc ‡@	182.80	...	+0.10	3.09
Stkmkt 100 Tkr @	253.80	253.80	-0.90	3.19
UK Growth Acc ‡@	440.60	...	+2.00	3.14
UK Growth Inc ‡@	235.30	...	+1.10	3.22

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRS LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Inc	1777.00	1873.48	+4.40	...
Far Eastern Inc	584.69	617.09	-0.73	1.42
Intl Growth Inc	380.56	400.59	+0.02	0.75
Japanese Inc	41.85	41.85	+0.43	...
Mutual European	2762.93	2908.99	-21.63	...
Mutual Far Eastern	940.70	992.82	-11.30	0.90
Mutual North Am	1983.00	2092.88	+6.23	0.24
Mutual UK Eq	1375.83	1452.06	-4.93	2.83
Nth American Inc	1227.65	1295.67	-7.28	...
UK Equity Inc	541.02	571.00	-1.80	3.18

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MGRS
0845 300 2244
Authorised Inv Funds (OEICs)
OEIC A Class
Managed Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Port A Acc ‡@	237.60	...	+0.80	0.01
Caut Port A Acc ‡@	207.10	...	+0.30	...
Caut Port A Inc ‡@	152.00	...	+0.30	...
Opps Port A Acc ‡@	280.20	...	+1.30	...
Prog Port A Acc ‡@	266.60	...	+1.10	...

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Eur Sel Gth A Acc ‡@	3281.00	...	-9.00	0.49

Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡@	373.30	...	-0.30	3.16
UK Trkr A Inc ‡@	187.20	...	-0.10	3.24

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	281.10	...	+0.20	2.14
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	104.70	...	+0.10	2.16
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡@	378.70	...	-2.40	1.34
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	230.10	...	+0.10	5.27
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	69.02	...	+0.03	5.42
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	371.00	...	+0.20	4.20
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	115.80	...	+0.10	4.30
Safety Plus A Acc ‡@	40.49	...	...	...
Strat Inc A Acc ‡@	187.50	...	+2.20	3.10
Strat Inc A Inc ‡@	82.99	...	+0.98	3.24
UK Gwth A Acc ‡@	189.20	...	-0.40	...
UK Sel Gwth A Acc ‡@	2190.00	...	+2.00	...

OEIC B Class
Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡@	412.00	...	-0.40	3.25
UK Trkr B Inc ‡@	186.10	...	-0.10	3.34

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond B Acc ‡@	370.70	...	+0.90	...
Corp Bond B Inc ‡@	136.30	...	+0.30	...
UK Gwth B Acc ‡@	205.60	...	-0.30	1.79
UK Sel Gwth B Acc ‡@	2481.00	...	...	1.09

OEIC C Class
UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Gth C Inc ‡@	125.90	...	-0.30	3.82
UK Sel Gwth C Acc ‡@	2598.00	...	...	1.29

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡@	88.74	...	+0.31	1.24
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡@	49.91	...	+0.17	1.25
AAA Income Acc ‡@	96.55	...	+0.34	1.67
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡@	209.50	...	+0.10	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	154.80	...	+1.00	3.09
Corp Bond Inc ‡@	51.85	...	+0.32	...
Euro Eq Gth Acc ‡@	240.00	...	-1.80	0.27
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡@	146.90	...	+0.10	...
Glob Advtg Acc ‡@	194.00	...	+0.10	...
Glob Eq Uncstrd Acc ‡@	156.30	...	+0.60	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡@	140.80	...	+0.20	4.39
Higher Inc Inc ‡@	43.89	...	+0.06	4.49
Japan Eq Gth Acc ‡@	127.40	...	...	...
Managed Acc ‡@	361.00	...	+0.50	0.41
Select Inc Acc ‡@	91.51	...	...	2.21
Select Inc Inc ‡@	51.26	...	-0.26	2.21
UK Eq Gth Acc ‡@	356.00	...	-1.00	1.88
UK Eq Hi Alpha ‡@	219.50	...	-0.60	...
UK Eq Hi Inc Acc ‡@	266.80	...	-0.80	...
UK Eq Hi Inc Inc ‡@	73.39	...	-0.24	...
UK Ethical Acc ‡@	193.90	...	+0.10	1.43
UK Opps Acc ‡@	232.20	...	+0.30	0.62
UK Opps Inc ‡@	209.70	...	+0.20	0.62
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡@	788.30	...	+3.90	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡@	131.55	...	-0.49	0.77
Balanced A Inc ‡@	117.70	...	-0.44	0.77
Cautious A Acc ‡@	109.92	...	-0.23	...
Cautious A Inc ‡@	95.32	...	-0.20	...
Dynamic A Acc ‡@	320.81	...	-1.44	...
Dynamic A Inc ‡@	289.79	...	-1.30	...
Growth A Acc ‡@	330.06	...	-1.48	...
Income A Acc ‡@	241.99	...	-0.82	...
Sterling Bond Acc ‡@	242.37	...	-0.28	...
Sterling Bond Inc ‡@	97.00	...	-0.11	...

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0683000
Intermediary Serv: 0800 0684000
Institutional Shares (Class 2) (500000 GBP)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle UK Eq Opps Ins Inc ‡@	119.65	...	+0.10	1.56

Retail Shares (Class 1)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡@	36.30	...	+0.04	4.17
Threadneedle Mthly Etr Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	78.27	...	+0.22	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Ins Inc ‡@	53.71	...	+0.28	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Rtl Inc ‡@	53.64	...	+0.28	1.75
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡@	45.89	...	+0.38	1.30
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡@	41.02	...	+0.11	3.13
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	95.77	...	+0.20	3.46
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	89.59	...	+0.09	2.70
Threadneedle UK Insti Rtl ‡@	175.11	...	-0.01	1.82
Threadneedle UK Mthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	67.39	...	+0.02	...
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡@	128.98	...	-0.15	1.49
Threadneedle UK Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡@	334.67	...	-2.78	...

For Resolution see Ignis
TU FUND MANAGERS LIMITED

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
British	888.00	888.00	-4.20	...
European	210.70	219.40	+1.00	...

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
125.79	119.17	Tr IL 1⅞% 22	123.94	− .29	1.56	−1.06
389.95	359.04	Tr IL 2½% 24 *	377.48	+ .59	1.43	−0.67
111.54	100.58	Tr IL 0⅛% 24	103.02	+ .08	...	−2.22
119.21	96.90	Tr IL 0⅛% 26	102.67	+ .36	...	−0.68
133.73	99.85	Tr IL 1¼% 27	108.22	+ .59	1.26	−0.40
128.69	93.33	Tr IL 0⅛% 28	102.57	+ .73	...	−0.32
130.35	92.36	Tr IL 0⅛% 29	102.31	+ .83	...	−0.24
138.99	90.61	Tr IL 0⅛% 31	104.14	+1.33	...	−0.35
401.24	301.39	Tr IL 4⅛% 30 *	342.37	+3.43	1.89	−0.06
158.48	99.08	Tr IL 1¼% 32	115.02	+1.56	1.09	−0.24
155.93	92.56	Tr IL 0¾% 34	109.52	+1.70	...	−0.09
318.19	206.76	Tr IL 2% 35 *	248.47	+3.82	0.98	0.09
156.37	82.01	Tr IL 0⅛% 36	101.60	+1.93	...	0.01
180.95	94.08	Tr IL 1⅛% 37	115.76	+2.21	1.02	0.06
162.80	78.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 39	99.56	+2.32	...	0.15
178.99	84.60	Tr IL 0⅝% 40	107.74	+2.54	...	0.17
172.97	75.20	Tr IL 0⅛% 41	98.99	+2.65	...	0.18
191.12	82.66	Tr IL 0⅝% 42	108.44	+2.96	0.58	0.19
179.88	72.26	Tr IL 0⅛% 44	96.97	+2.92	...	0.27
186.84	70.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 46	95.87	+3.26	...	0.31
217.69	80.78	Tr IL 0¾% 47	110.14	+3.71	0.69	0.33
197.39	66.79	Tr IL 0⅛% 48	94.87	+3.51	...	0.33
219.64	72.64	Tr IL 0½% 50	104.73	+3.86	...	0.32
217.31	65.69	Tr IL 0¼% 52	98.75	+3.89	...	0.29
287.21	88.77	Tr IL 1¼% 55	129.59	+4.81	1.06	0.30
231.44	60.50	Tr IL 0⅛% 56	94.77	+3.79	...	0.29
238.55	60.14	Tr IL 0⅛% 58	93.94	+3.63	...	0.31
274.80	64.93	Tr IL 0⅜% 62	103.94	+4.10	...	0.27
284.18	55.87	Tr IL 0⅛% 65	96.27	+4.25	...	0.22
306.70	54.65	Tr IL 0⅛% 68	96.13	+4.01	...	0.21
361.32	55.40	Tr IL 0⅛% 73	102.22	+4.58	...	0.08

Longs (Over 15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
145.09	94.91	Tr 4¼% 36	107.93	+ .88	3.94	3.50
111.85	67.54	Tr 1¾% 37	79.11	+ .84	...	3.59
160.76	98.36	Tr 4¾% 38	113.63	+1.11	4.18	3.62
102.69	58.05	Tr 1⅛% 39	69.55	+ .85	...	3.64
154.53	92.08	Tr 4¼% 39	107.26	+1.11	3.96	3.67
157.56	91.30	Tr 4¼% 40	107.19	+1.08	...	3.70
105.18	54.72	Tr 1¼% 41	67.44	+ .83	...	3.66
145.53	76.78	Tr 3¼% 44	93.06	+1.20	...	3.73
167.93	93.79	Tr 4½% 42	111.30	+1.18	4.04	3.70
152.56	79.61	Tr 3½% 45	96.63	+1.14	...	3.72
172.99	89.35	Tr 4¼% 46	108.15	+1.20	3.93	3.73
98.02	43.93	Tr 0⅞% 46	56.41	+ .88	...	3.69
112.58	51.06	Tr 1½% 47	64.72	+ .98	...	3.70
119.85	53.78	Tr 1¾% 49	67.96	+ .98	...	3.67
182.17	89.75	Tr 4¼% 49	109.16	+1.23	3.89	3.71
93.40	35.82	Tr 0⅝% 50	47.95	+ .73	...	3.60
207.36	63.35	Tr 0⅛% 51	94.84	+3.69	...	0.32
108.66	44.40	Tr 1¼% 51	57.80	+ .92	...	3.63
176.35	82.51	Tr 3¾% 52	101.77	+1.40	...	3.65
117.44	46.78	Tr 1½% 53	61.17	+1.05	...	3.60
121.53	48.25	Tr 1⅝% 54	63.02	+1.08	...	3.58
199.89	90.79	Tr 4¼% 55	112.57	+1.59	3.78	3.60
128.22	49.39	Tr 1¾% 57	64.99	+ .87	...	3.50
206.00	87.32	Tr 4% 60	110.02	+1.38	...	3.51
91.83	26.21	Tr 0½% 61	38.58	+ .70	...	3.33
166.39	60.88	Tr 2½% 65	79.50	+1.08	...	3.42
210.06	79.01	Tr 3½% 68	101.39	+1.31	...	3.44
142.26	42.99	Tr 1⅝% 71	59.53	+ .91	...	3.30

Mediums (5-15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
100.70	97.34	Tr 0¾% 23	98.61	+ .06	...	3.09
103.23	98.04	Tr 2¼% 23	99.19	+ .08	...	3.39
99.28	94.34	Tr 0⅛% 24	96.41	+ .10	...	3.41
101.43	94.79	Tr 1% 24	96.92	+ .12	...	3.35
106.22	96.82	Tr 2¾% 24	98.82	+ .16	...	3.46
114.41	100.77	Tr 5% 25	103.65	+ .19	4.82	3.28
100.68	90.15	Tr 0⅝% 25	93.92	+ .21	...	3.20
105.60	93.15	Tr 2% 25	96.78	+ .23	...	3.25
98.54	86.33	Tr 0⅛% 26	91.17	+ .24	...	3.11
104.62	89.28	Tr 1½% 26	94.25	+ .28	...	3.20
104.08	85.65	Tr 1¼% 27	91.72	+ .35	...	3.20
121.70	98.23	Tr 4¼% 27	104.72	+ .39	4.06	3.22
97.53	79.15	Tr 0⅛% 28	85.63	+ .41	...	3.19
107.28	84.72	Tr 1⅝% 28	92.04	+ .47	...	3.12
137.18	107.13	Tr 6% 28	114.71	+ .55	5.23	3.27
99.23	77.61	Tr 0½% 29	84.84	+ .49	...	3.25
102.12	78.21	Tr 0⅞% 29	86.07	+ .56	...	3.15
97.58	72.39	Tr 0⅜% 30	80.62	+ .71	...	3.18
135.76	101.89	Tr 4¾% 30	111.14	+ .82	4.27	3.16
95.62	69.25	Tr 0¼% 31	77.52	+ .65	...	3.26
102.23	73.06	Tr 1% 32	82.00	+ .72	...	3.30
135.31	98.13	Tr 4¼% 32	108.28	+ .85	3.93	3.23
101.13	68.57	Tr 0⅞% 33	77.90	+ .80	...	3.37
144.37	98.89	Tr 4½% 34	110.62	+1.01	4.07	3.39
96.25	61.24	Tr 0⅝% 35	70.98	+ .84	...	3.49

Shorts (under 5 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
99.85	98.87	Tr 0⅛% 23	99.66	+ .02	...	2.86
99.16	90.04	Tr 0¼% 25	93.38	+ .15	...	3.51
99.06	84.28	Tr 0⅜% 26	89.73	+ .28	...	3.23

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

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Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by Morningstar. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last month's ending share price

12 month high and low Please note the 12 month high and low figures for shares supplied by Morningstar are based on intra-day figures, not closing prices.

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
541½	89½	Aston Martin Lag	169⅝	+7¼	...	-1.0

Banking & finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
252¾	133	abrdn	188½	-1¼	7.7	4.1
3266	1729	**Admiral**	2052	-33	7.3	10.4
73½	34	ADVFN♦	34	-1½	4.4	5.9
390	246⅛	AJ Bell	356⅜	-7⅛	2.0	33.4
27303⅝	20337⅞	Aon Corpn	24641⅜	-414⅞	0.6	60.1
42⅛	21½	Appreciate Group♦	41¼	+⅛	2.4	17.9
1030	645	Arbuthnot Bkg♦	870	-5	1.8	19.2
20	11	Argo Group♦	11	...	...	5.0
297¾	180⅞	Ashmore Gp	235	+1	7.1	8.0
1578¾	1162	Aus New Z	1315⅜	-6	6.1	10.2
602⅞	373¾	**Aviva**	444⅞	-2½	4.8	58.5
290⅞	193⅜	Banco Santander	232	-5¼	2.7	5.5
2635	986	Bank of Georgia	2545	-15	...	7.8
217	135⅝	**Barclays**	155⅛	-5	1.9	3.7
½	⅛	Blue Star Capital♦	⅛	...	...	2.5
359	277	BP Marsh&Ptnrs♦	299	...	0.8	8.2
38	7⅞	Braveheart Inv♦	9¼	+⅛	...	0.2
517	266	Brewin Dolphin	515	+1	2.8	28.1
493	173⅞	Bridgepoint	192	-7⅞	...	12.0
82	40	Cenkos Secs♦	45½	...	7.6	9.2
325	256½	Chesnara	282	+2	7.8	15.6
68	31	City of Lon Gp♦	51¾	+½	...	-3.5
530	343½	City Lon Inv Gp	435	+25	7.5	10.2
1452	894	Close Bros	1020	-31	5.8	7.6
317	211½	CMC Markets‡	228	-2	13.4	6.9
794⅞	487	Commerzbk	671⅛	-4⅝	...	34.4
1248⅛	655⅜	Deutsche Bk	846⅝	-32½	...	9.9
312¼	177⅝	Direct Line Ins	220⅝	+4⅛	10.1	9.1
59½	57	Downing ONE VCT	57	...	4.3	7.7
1⅛	⅜	Drumz♦	⅞	...	...	-7.9
180	74⅜	EFG-Hermes Hldg	94	+11⅜	...	6.0
359	122½	EPE Special Opps♦	152½	+1½	...	8.5
956⅝	654⅛	FBD	956⅝	...	...	4.2
72½	67½	Fiske♦	67½	...	...	12.0
83½	59	Frenkel Topping♦	73¾	...	1.8	42.8
761	458½	Georgia Capital	759	+19	...	2.0
1005	710	Gresham House♦	740	...	0.8	29.7
506	269	H&T Group♦	472	+1	1.8	15.1
52	33	Hansard Global	39⅛	...	11.3	13.5
1391	740¾	**Hargreaves L**	880⅛	-5⅛	4.3	15.6
194⅞	143⅜	Helios Under♦	157½	...	1.9	...
567⅛	431¼	**HSBC**	492⅝	-5	3.2	10.7
847½	648	IG Group	788	-9½	5.4	8.0
1482	500	Impax♦	743	-29	1.4	24.5
2208	953⅛	**Intermed Cap**‡	1197	-28½	4.6	6.8
142⅞	71	IPF	71	-3⅞	3.0	3.9
173¾	136	Intl Public Pntshp	149⅜	-½	4.9	19.2
536¾	351½	Investec‡	476½	-1½	2.7	11.9
320	253	Investment Co	267	...	0.3	9.5
123¾	52¾	IP Group	59	-⅞	1.6	2.2
300	94	Jarvis Securities♦	155	-4	8.7	11.1
265	83¾	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	130	-1	13.1	4.8
95⅜	55⅞	Just Group	77¾	+1¾	...	...
611	346½	Lancashire Hdgs	611	+2½	1.8	...
307¾	204	**Legal & Gen**	254	-4½	7.0	7.8
51331⅞	502⅝	Liberty Group	502⅝	-2⅝	...	...
2265	704	Liontrust‡	1050	-32	4.4	13.1
62	39½	Livermore Invs♦	40½	...	8.7	2.6
55⅛	39	**Lloyds Bkg Gp**	45⅜	-⅝	5.6	6.3
36	28¾	LMS Capital	28¾	-1⅝	3.1	12.5
8582	6370	**Lond Stk Ex Gp**	7468	-146	1.0	76.3
227¼	159⅞	**M&G**	184¾	-¾	9.9	57.7
274⅞	178¾	Man	214	+⅞	3.9	8.5
17½	7½	Manx Fin♦	17¼	+¾	1.0	8.7
3⅜	1⅞	Marechale Cap♦	1⅞	...	...	0.9
14625¼	11813⅛	Marsh McLn	13785¼	-322⅜	1.4	28.7
892½	530	Mattioli Woods♦	625	...	3.3	...
21¾	11¼	Metal Tiger♦	11½	+⅜	...	4.4
110⅜	69	Metro Bank	110⅜	-2⅜	...	-0.7
1859⅞	1434¾	Nat Aust Bk	1694½	+4⅜	2.8	16.8
283⅜	207⅝	**NWG**	258½	-5⅞	4.0	10.1
343	170⅜	Numis♦‡	189⅜	+¾	6.3	3.8
599	375⅜	Onesavings Bank	479⅛	-4½	4.0	6.3
691	496	PayPoint‡	496	-9	6.4	15.5
14	¼	PCF Group♦	¾	+⅛	...	-0.4
701⅜	506¾	**Phoenix Gp**	612⅛	-3⅛	7.8	-7.0
366	136¼	Provident	178⅝	-4¼	...	3.3
1337	797½	**Prudential**	1065½	-24½	1.1	17.3
3	⅞	Quantum Blockchain♦	1	...	...	-5.7
179½	82	Quilter	93½	-⅝	5.6	66.8
175⅜	57½	Randall & Quilter♦	57½	-3½	6.7	85.8
2210	1518	Rathbone Grp	2050	+5	3.6	15.8
1⅜	½	RiverFort Global Opps♦	¾	...	2.5	2.2
1690	1370	Rockwood Strategic	1675	-15	1.6	2.4
2830	1905	S & U	2110	-25	4.2	9.9
2⅝	1½	Sancus Lending Grp♦	1½	...	...	-0.7
60¾	40¾	Schroder REIT	44⅜	-1	5.6	4.7
718¾	358¾	**Schroders**	455⅝	-4¼	25.4	2.1
1731½	920	**St James Place**	1127½	-30½	5.4	21.4
638½	414	**Stand Chart**	604½	-2	1.4	13.5
15½	7¼	Starvest♦	7½	...	...	-1.2
33	22½	STM Group♦	29	...	4.8	11.1
4446⅝	3251⅜	Sun Life Can	3742	-52¼	3.6	9.5
10	3⅝	Tavistock Inv♦	7⅛	...	0.7	1.1
2270	901	TBC Bank Group	2170	-10	1.6	6.3
16¾	7	Tern♦	9½	-¼	...	7.1
27	15¼	Time Finance♦	19	...	...	11.5
1300	900	Volvere♦	1175	...	...	...
49⅝	25	WH Ireland♦	27½	...	...	15.4
33½	27	Walker Crips Grp	29½	...	2.5	84.2
4833⅝	3063⅜	Wells Fargo	3374	-78⅛	1.6	9.2
1364⅜	1062¼	Westpac	1293⅜	-3¾	3.6	17.5
30	21½	Worsley Investors Ltd	24½	+½	...	76.8
40296½	33565¾	Zurich Fincl	39268	-546⅜	4.1	15.3

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	Dis(-) or Pm
1477	1042	**3I Group**♦	1336½	-8½	3.2	-7.4
368½	248¾	3i Infrastructure♦	328	-1	3.3	2.7
104½	83⅛	Abrdn Div I&G	94	+⅜	4.7	-19.4
1488	1066	Aberforth Smlr♦	1306	...	2.5	-9.9
1046	867¾	Alliance♦	929	-16	2.3	-4.0
514	352	Asia Dragon Tr	416	-4	1.3	-9.9
248	183½	Athelney Trust	210	...	4.5	-8.5
1088⅞	169	AVI Global Trust	189⅜	-½	1.5	-8.7
394	206¼	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	266	-1¾	1.6	-7.0
149½	73½	Baillie Gifford Eu Gr	88⅜	-1¾	0.3	-13.6
1015¾	657	Baillie Gifford Jpn Tr♦	756	-13	1.1	-6.0
231	131¼	Baillie Gifford SN	154½	-2⅜	...	-8.3
246	139⅜	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	164⅜	-2⅛	2.0	-12.7
124½	90⅞	Bankers♦	98½	-1½	2.0	-8.0
5232	3610	BH Macro	4560	-35	...	12.0
1217½	722¼	Biotech Growth	908	-10	...	-7.0
151	95	BlckRck Com Inc	134	...	3.0	-2.2
140	114	BlckRck Fro Inv	126¼	+¾	3.7	-8.5
704	396	BlckRck Grt Euro	480	-2	1.3	-5.7
206	164	BlckRck Inc & Gwth	191	-1	3.5	-6.4
457	325½	BlckRck Latin Am	355	+2½	4.9	-9.4
215	183¼	BlckRck Sust Am Inc	200½	-2	3.6	-1.7
2140	1162	BlckRck Smlr♦	1348	+4	2.4	-14.0
975⅝	477⅞	BlckRck Throgmorton	590	-5	1.7	-4.4
804⅞	524	BlckRck Wld Min♦	672	-9	6.4	-0.1
24¼	7¼	Blue Plan Int Fn‡	9½	...	...	-14.0
340	256	BMO Cap&Inc	293½	...	3.9	-2.7
124⅛	68½	BMO Comm Prop	95½	-1¾	3.3	-30.3
172¾	122	BMO Glbl Smaller♦	144½	-½	1.1	-10.3
520	375½	BMO Priv Eq Ord♦	430	-1	3.3	-39.3
101	67⅜	BMO Real Estate	68½	-½	3.3	-43.2
94⅜	71	BMO UK HIT	83	...	6.1	-7.7
95	79	BMO UK HIT B	85	...	...	-5.4
376	294	BMO UK HIT UNIT	332	...	4.5	-7.7
1495	1072½	Brown Advsr US Smlr	1205	-12½	...	-11.8
1135	888	Brunner	1005	-22½	1.8	-10.8
4075	3015	Caledonia Inv	3565	-45	4.7	-28.0
191½	141	Invesco BondInc♦	167	+1¾	6.9	1.3
427	363¼	City of Lon IT	405	-1½	5.0	1.4
123½	96	Crystal Amber Fd	99	...	23.2	-21.9
555	452¾	Dunedin Entp♦	510	+7	8.9	-8.3
653½	537	Edinburgh IT	626	-4	3.8	-7.5
305	154½	Edin Wwide	179½	+1⅛	...	-8.2
324¼	268	EP Global Opp	310½	...	1.4	-12.1
140½	74½	European Assets	89⅝	-1⅝	8.9	-5.0
847	608	European Opp Tr	727	-6	0.3	-14.0
942	767⅛	**F&C Investment Tr**	902	-8	1.4	-1.7
497	406⅛	Fidlty Asian Val	487	-2½	2.7	-5.2
318¼	181⅞	Fidelity China Sp	241	-1½	2.1	-7.9
384¼	256½	Fidlty Euro Val♦	319	-8	2.1	-4.8
241	143	Fidlty Jap Tru	168½	-3	...	-9.0
311	232	Fidlty Spec Val♦	270½	-1½	2.3	-5.9
925	731¾	Fins Gwth & Inc♦	846	-12	1.9	-4.8
120⅛	85⅝	GCP Infrastructure	99½	+1½	6.3	-12.9
825¾	552⅝	Gen Emer Mkts♦	596¾	-6⅜	1.9	-11.0
55	28½	Gldn Prosp Prc Mtl♦	35	-¼	...	-4.2
168½	130⅜	Greencoat UK Wind	151⅛	+⅛	5.9	-2.4
219⅞	166	Hansa Investment♦	180	+1	1.0	-40.4
218⅞	168	Hansa Inv Co 'A'	173	-2	1.0	-42.0
2860	1986	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq♦	2135	-45	...	-47.0
165½	120½	Hend Euro Foc	144½	-¾	2.1	-13.1
185½	137¼	Hend High Inc	165	-1	6.1	0.5
1242	674¼	Hend Smlr♦	822	...	2.6	-10.0
2510	1540	Herald	1780	+4	...	-16.3
457½	310	HgCapital Trust	354	-9	1.6	-19.2
184⅞	138⅞	HICL Infra♦	162⅜	-1⅛	5.0	-0.2
286	216	Highbridge Tact♦	244	+5	...	-10.9
1300	928	ICG Ent Tr♦	1180	-4	1.1	-36.1
560	370⅞	Impax Env Mkts♦	419	-1	0.6	-2.1
365⅝	280	Invesco Asia Tr	326	-6½	4.0	-10.0
191½	141	Invesco BondInc♦	167	+1¾	6.9	1.3
176	111	IPST Bal♦	128	...	...	-17.5
250	200	IPST Gbl Eq	224	...	2.8	-11.5
102⅝	93	IPST Managed	98	+2	0.9	-9.2
199⅞	141	IPST UK Eq	158	-5	3.6	-11.2
617⅞	373½	IP UKSmallerCos	422½	-1½	1.7	-14.5
800	650	JPM American	693	-13	0.9	-0.4
456	294½	JPM Asia	351	-2¼	4.2	-9.8
522	246½	JPM Chinese	338½	-½	5.9	-6.9
778	610¼	JPM Claverhs♦	692	-5	4.6	-0.5
105	99	JPM Elect Mg C	103	...	0.2	-0.4
1115¼	886¼	JPM Elect Mg G	937½	...	2.0	-3.9
111	88	JPM Elect Mg I	100	...	4.6	0.1
129⅛	91	JPM Em Mkts	106¾	-1⅛	1.1	-7.0
548	339	JPM Euro disc	396	-5	1.5	-14.1
148	108	JPM GEMI♦	121	-2½	3.7	-9.7
474	386	JPM GG&I	424	-4	3.7	-0.6
898	691¼	JPM Indian	832	-4	...	-16.0
502¼	301	JPM Jap Sml Co	324	-4	4.4	-8.1
681¾	408½	JPM Japan‡	464	-5	1.0	-6.8
1375	735	JPM Mid Cap	870	-7	2.9	-12.7
108¼	85¼	JPM Multi-Ass G&I	95¼	-¼	4.3	-1.6
752⅝	55⅛	JPM Em E, ME & Af Sec♦	84½	+0.40	53.7	82.4
404	230	JPM Smllr Co	283½	...	2.1	-9.6
320	174	Keystone IT	210½	-3	1.6	-12.3
829	649	Law Debenture	774	-3	4.0	1.8
143¼	99	Lowland♦	117	-2¾	4.8	-7.9
235	156¾	Majedie	191½	-2	4.6	-20.0
428	272½	M Currie Port	302	-7	1.3	-0.7
121⅞	90	Marwyn Val In	95	...	5.3	-44.5
272	158¼	Mercantile IT♦	196⅜	-1¾	3.1	-12.4
591	480	Merchants	556	...	5.0	0.5
870	639¾	Mid Wynd	707	-7	1.4	1.8
1385⅞	875	Monks Inv Tst	963	-23	0.2	-7.6
221	104⅛	Montanaro Eur Sml	134	-3⅛	0.6	-10.2
928	715	Murray Income Trust	826	-3	4.0	-7.5
1352	1090	Murray Int♦	1304	-10	4.2	1.1
90½	72	Nb Global Floating	72¾	-1⅛	6.8	-7.7
370¼	286¼	Pacific Assets	350	-9	0.4	-6.7
342½	229⅛	Pantheon Int♦	262½	+1½	...	-45.5
3110	2295	**Pershing Sq**♦	2855	-25	0.8	-33.5
507	465½	Personal Assets♦	476½	-1½	1.4	1.0
2751¼	1764	Polar Cap Tech♦	1816	-54	...	-9.5
202	143⅜	Prem Glb & Inf♦	156½	...	3.8	-13.0
148½	112½	Renewables Inf♦	129½	+⅛	5.1	-3.4
2740	1928	RIT Cap Ptnr♦	2010	-5	...	-17.8
750	456	Riverstone♦	668	-6	...	-48.4
509⅞	366½	Schroder TotRt♦	403½	-8¼	1.9	-5.2
598	446	Schrd Asia Pac♦	507	+1	1.7	-11.4
319½	254½	Schrod Inc Gwth	296½	-1½	4.4	0.1
220	185⅞	Schrod Jap Gwth	205½	-4½	2.1	-8.3
718	454	Schrod UKMid♦	539	-6	2.6	-13.3
34½	14¾	Schroder UK PP Tr♦	15	-⅜	...	-47.6
546	434	Scot American♦	502	-6	2.7	1.2
1404½	670½	**Scot Mtge**	752½	-18⅛	0.4	-7.0
242	207	Secs Tst Scot	226	-2	2.6	0.8
107⅜	75½	Sequoia Eco	87⅜	+⅝	6.7	-7.2
255¾	195⅛	Temple Bar	217½	-1	3.5	-5.6
179½	130	Tplton Emg Mkt♦	142⅜	-3½	2.2	-13.6
⅜	⅛	Tiger Royal and Inv#	⅛	...	...	87.5
494	263	TR Property♦	315	-5	4.5	-6.3
83	64⅜	Troy Inc&Gth	72	+1	2.0	-2.0
260	147	Utilico Ord♦	160	+7	3.3	-29.3
227½	196½	Utilico Emer Mkt♦	200	...	3.3	-13.8
774⅞	500	Vietnam Ent Inv♦	578	...	...	-11.8
252	199¾	Witan♦	216½	-2½	2.4	-6.7
3625	2820	Ww Health♦	3230	-20	0.7	-6.3



Construction & property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
237½	133	Alumasc♦	152	...	6.2	7.7
17⅛	10⅛	Aseana Props	11	...	...	-5.5
71¾	48⅝	Assura Grp‡	55¾	-⅝	5.2	11.1
2⅜	1⅜	Aukett Swanke♦	2⅜	...	...	-3.5
342½	215½	Balfour Beatty	342½	+3	1.3	16.2
760	323⅜	**Barratt Devs**	408⅜	+4¾	7.2	6.3
3363	1586½	Bellway‡	1951	+34½	6.0	5.8
4903	3165	**Berkeley**	3867	+53	0.2	10.0
1724	987	Big Yellow Group	1179	+25	2.8	7.7
290	181½	Billington Hldgs♦	290	...	1.4	23.5
345	227	Boot (Henry)	232	-8	2.3	12.4
556⅜	324¾	**Br Land**‡	400¼	...	3.7	54.8
160	112	Caledonian Tst♦	145	...	...	28.9
179¼	95½	Cap & Count Prop	104½	-1⅜	0.4	30.7
65	43¾	Cap & Regnl	57	+1¾	...	-0.5
2550	2025	Cardiff Prop	2420	...	0.7	26.3
38½	15	Carecapital♦	15	...	...	-1.7
170	106	Clarke T	122	+¼	3.6	8.7
231	131⅜	CLS Hldgs	153⅜	+1½	4.9	5.2
464¾	191⅝	Countryside Prop	229¾	+14	...	16.7
37⅝	6⅛	Craven House♦	6⅞	...	...	-0.1
4002	2756½	**CRH**	3177	-89½	2.7	13.2
3528	1876	Derwent London	2406	+2	3.1	10.7
4¼	3	Dolphin Capital♦	3¾	...	...	-2.6
36½	23	First Prop♦‡	24¾	...	1.8	...
52½	36½	Fletcher King♦	43½	...	...	...
46⅝	27¼	Foxtons Group	30⅝	...	0.5	...
190⅞	145	Galliford Try	157¾	-⅛	2.9	35.0
620	252½	Genuit Group	282½	-2½	3.1	17.1
800	337	Gleeson (MJ)	349	+9	4.3	5.4
1255	630½	Grafton Gp Uts	782⅞	-14¾	4.5	9.0
319⅛	205⅜	Grainger	256⅜	-1⅛	2.1	15.9
741	409⅛	Gr Portland‡	516	+5	2.4	-6.4
39⅞	17⅛	Hammerson	24¼	...	1.6	-2.6
191	101	Harworth Gp	105	+2	1.7	3.6
630	450	Heath (Samuel)♦	450	...	1.5	9.3
454	296½	Helical PLC‡	335½	+½	3.0	8.1
1065	875	Highcroft Invs	950	...	5.4	4.1
208⅛	148½	Ibstock	151½	-3¾	2.7	19.6
314	181	James Halstead♦‡	181	-5½	4.2	19.2
1000	591	Keller	749	-1	4.7	8.7
9234⅞	3873⅜	Kingspan Group	4531	-144⅝	0.7	17.8
813⅛	485¼	**Land Sec**‡	639⅜	+3¾	5.3	...
105	71½	Life Science Reit	74	...	...	...
25	12	Lon & Assoc	20	...	...	-2.7
285⅛	161¾	London Metric Prop‡	179¾	-2⅜	4.8	3.8
59	37	Macau Prop Op	46¼	...	...	-6.0
713¾	225⅜	Marshalls	286⅛	-4⅜	3.1	10.4
138	74	Michelmersh♦‡	93½	-3	3.9	14.9
2530	1392	Morgan Sindall	1516	-22	4.6	7.4
14650	11100	Mountview	12100	...	3.5	15.0
100	68¼	NewRiver REIT‡	79⅜	-½	3.7	-2.7
297	195	Palace Capital	212½	+½	5.1	10.1
310	255	Panther Securities♦	295	...	4.0	2.6
2883	1138½	**Persimmon**	1259½	+2½	18.6	5.1
8	2¾	Pires Investments♦	2¾	...	...	-6.2
175	45	Plaza Cent	45	-20	...	-0.1
153	98⅝	Primary Hlth	113⅛	...	5.4	11.5
40½	29½	Real Estate Invs♦	30¼	-¼	12.4	3.9
709	372½	Redrow	468⅛	+11⅛	5.2	5.8
1418	794	Safestore	961½	+13	2.1	5.4
1450	763½	Savills	817½	-15	2.8	8.1
7¼	5¾	Secure Property♦	5¾	...	...	15.2
1436½	694	**Segro**	795	-29	2.8	2.3
49¾	27¾	SIG	29¾	+½	...	...
98½	37⅜	SigmaRoc♦	56	+⅛	...	...
142¾	66½	Sirius Real Estate‡	77⅝	-1½	4.2	6.0
161½	146½	Smart (J)	160½	...	2.0	4.3
50	26	Steppe Cement♦	42½	...	8.9	9.7
178	85	**Taylor Wimpey**	103⅜	+1⅛	8.0	6.8
178½	129	Town Centre‡	154	-6	2.2	6.0
1635	738	Travis Perkins	910¾	-29	1.3	8.8
249	125⅝	Tritax Big Box Reit	149⅞	-1⅞	4.3	2.7
118	58⅝	Tritax Eurobox‡	62½	-⅝	...	...
413½	184½	Tyman	228	-7½	3.5	9.0
1207	791½	**UNITE GRP**	936½	-5½	2.0	10.9
1225	519½	Vistry Group	627½	+11½	6.3	5.5
176¾	105⅜	Warehouse REIT‡	111¾	-⅛	5.5	2.6
887	343⅜	Workspace Grp	432⅜	-⅜	4.1	-6.4
755	645	Wynnstay Props♦‡	675	-5	3.1	4.8

Consumer goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
6¾	4	Agriterra♦	4⅜	-⅛	...	-0.5
30½	25	Airea♦	26	+½	...	9.6
952	682	Anglo-Eastern	785	-8	...	7.1
355	207½	Animalcare♦	225	...	1.7	...
2131	1237	**AB Foods**‡	1572	-57	0.3	25.9
133½	79	Bakkavor Group	95	...	6.9	9.9
588	432	Barr (AG)	527	+12	...	18.7
5⅝	1¾	Bidstack Group♦	3⅛	+⅛	...	-2.6
122	26	Brand Architekts♦	26	...	...	-1.1
3628	2677	**Brit Amer Tob**	3285	+17	6.5	11.1
949½	707½	Britvic	800½	-12	3.0	18.1
2177	1482	**Burberry Grp**‡	2069	-67	2.0	17.8
243	143⅞	C&C Grp	174	-2⅛	...	...
9¾	2½	Capital Metals♦	2½	...	...	-0.6
160	92	Carr's Grp	120	+2½	4.1	14.8
640	363	Character Grp♦	402½	...	2.2	7.1
1797½	1070	Churchill China♦	1175	+10	...	...
2687	1460½	**Coca Cola HBC**	1942	-38½	2.7	15.5
880	595	Colefax♦	625	+5	...	11.0
3820	2586	Cranswick‡	3100	-2	2.2	16.3
311	164	Devro‡	309	...	2.9	16.7
4103½	3343	**Diageo**	3675½	-89	1.9	28.2
1⅞	⅝	Distil♦	¾	...	...	20.0
1085	784	Evans (M.P.)♦	806	-28	3.4	6.9
101	66½	Finsbury Food♦‡	91	+1	2.6	10.8
10090	1722	Games Workshop	7300	-170	3.4	20.1
1134⅞	837¾	Glanbia	1012	-1⅝	2.3	24.9
141	62	Greencore	62	-1⅛	...	12.4
459	231	Headlam	296	-6	2.6	12.7
1250	515	Hilton Food	515	-10	4.3	10.7
57	25½	Hornby♦	28½	...	...	...
2185	1486	**Imperial Brands**‡	2041	+7	6.7	6.8
1⅞	1¼	J Lewis Hford♦	1⅜	...	...	8.3
10339⅝	7405⅛	Kerry Gp	7429½	-213½	1.0	20.5
61	15½	McBride	20¼	+⅜	...	-3.6
335	200	Mulberry Group♦	230	...	...	9.5
1540	1055	Nichols♦	1087½	+12½	1.7	...
327	165	Norcros‡	174	-2	4.7	5.5
377½	293¾	Origin Ents♦	374¾	+28¼	2.4	11.8
68	50	Pittards♦‡	61½	...	0.8	29.0
710	302½	Portmeirion♦	302½	...	4.3	12.8
1	⅝	Provexis♦	⅝	...	...	0.3
217	182¾	PZ Cussons	217	+1½	2.8	25.0
200½	102	REA	109½	-1	...	-8.6
3¼	1	Real Gd Fd♦	1½	...	...	0.1
610	235	Tandem♦	275	-2½	3.2	3.9
1315	507	Treatt	660	...	0.9	26.5
4½	1¾	Ukrproduct Gp♦	3¼	...	...	-2.2
66⅞	7¾	Unbound Group♦	7¾	...	...	...
4876½	4010	Unilever (NV)	4744½	-87½	3.0	24.3
4186	3328	**Unilever**	4137	-13½	3.5	21.2
1210	317	Victoria♦	451	+16	...	...

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
...	...	Ass Br Eng#	15	...	...	-3.5
1381	739	Avon Rubber	1129	+37	2.6	...
367½	268½	Babcock	294	+4¾	...	-1.8
846⅛	528¾	**BAE Sys**	837⅜	+3⅛	2.8	15.3
2250	1600	Braime A N/V♦	2050	...	0.5	23.1
2300	1480	Braime Group♦	1750	+50	0.6	19.7
602½	500	Caffyns‡	500	...	...	7.2
6½	3	Cap XX Ld♦	3¾	-⅛	...	-8.0
374	279	Castings‡	347	-1	4.4	16.7
7⅞	3¾	Chamberlin♦	3¾	...	...	-0.2
54	14½	Checkit♦	17½	+¼	...	-2.1
600	391	Cohort♦	461	+31	2.4	40.9
398	160½	Crestchic Plc♦	398	...	...	...
1760	1020⅜	Dewhurst♦	1065	...	1.2	12.2
371	232⅞	Dialight	311	...	...	...
1754¾	907⅛	Electrolux 'B'	1143⅛	-55½	5.7	8.6
180	85½	Feedback♦	85½	...	...	...
1275	426	Gooch Hsego♦	510	+22	0.8	37.7
3570	2400	Goodwin	3100	-40	3.3	17.1
3216	1876½	**Halma**	2140	-37	0.8	30.9
1826	893	Hill & Smith‡	1178	-2	2.5	27.7
125	77½	Holders Tech♦	80	...	0.9	4.8
3¼	¾	Image Scan♦	⅞	...	...	5.5
1789	1071	IMI	1338	-15	1.7	18.2
...	...	Inspirit Energy♦	...	...	...	...
8740	6090	Judges Scientific♦	8380	+100	0.6	42.2
81	60	LPA♦	79	...	...	...
798¾	732¾	Meggitt	798¾	+⅛	...	...
173½	95½	**Melrose**	126	-3¾	1.2	...
368	217	Morgan Advanced	310	-3	2.1	13.0
560	227½	Mpac♦	270	-5	...	7.0
451	213	MS Intl♦‡	451	-16	0.7	64.4
2665	1720	Oxford Inst‡	2175	-35	0.7	29.7
2917⅛	1047¼	Philips El nv	1158¾	-50⅛	6.1	20.6
36½	12¾	PipeHawk♦	13½	...	...	28.7
101½	23⅛	Pressure Tech♦	35	+3½	...	-2.9
5000	3342	Renishaw	3740	-56	1.7	21.3
31¾	20	Renold♦	22⅛	+¼	...	7.9
128½	66⅛	**Rolls-Royce**	89⅛	-1⅛	...	60.6
2½	1⅛	Ross Gp	1¼	...	...	-3.2
373⅜	229½	Rotork	311⅜	-2½	2.7	33.8
210	137½	SDI Group♦	155	-1½	...	25.5
152	111	Senior	122½	-1⅜	...	21.4
74⅜	48	Severfield	62⅞	-⅝	4.6	11.2
16¼	11¼	Six Hundred♦	11¾	...	...	68.7
1830⅝	1146⅝	SKF B	1275¼	-69⅜	4.4	9.4
270	175	Slingsby (HC)♦	270	...	...	4.4
1629	1364	**Smiths**	1610	-4½	2.3	25.6
1415	946¾	Solid State♦	1415	-20	1.1	34.1
598	360	Somero Enter♦	385	...	4.1	8.5
3704	2458	Spectris	3145	-82	2.2	10.3
16255	9130	**Spirax-Sarco**	11170	-225	1.1	35.1
57½	37	Surface Trsfms♦	39½	...	...	...
3½	1½	Tanfield♦	3¼	...	...	-9.0
495	345	Thorpe FW♦	408	...	1.4	28.3
4¾	⅝	TP Group♦	2⅛	...	...	-3.3
100½	48½	Transense Tech♦	91	...	...	66.9
3500	2824	Ultra Electrncs	3500	+6	1.6	37.4
491	284½	Vesuvius	380	-3⅛	5.3	10.1
1530	1060	Videndum	1076	-2	1.4	19.7
358	225	Volex♦‡	245	-9½	1.3	13.3
1897	1328½	Weir	1695	+3	0.6	28.6
5250	1464	XP Power‡	2090	-40	4.4	11.1
185	111¼	Zytronic♦	140	-2½	...	46.6

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1750	1049	Abcam♦	1226	+123	...	...
338	234½	AdvancedMedical♦	266½	-6	0.6	41.9
35	11⅝	Allergy Therap♦	11⅝	-⅛	...	...
156	46½	Angle♦	48	+½	...	-6.5
668	370	Anpario♦	505	...	1.6	26.5
11440	8193	**AstraZeneca**	11360	-40	1.8	...
46	29	Circassia Group♦	34	...	...	34.0
245¾	166¾	**Convatec**	229½	-7⅛	1.8	53.6
97½	29½	Creighton	29½	-1	3.9	5.6
5325	2520	**Dechra Pharma**	2774	-46	1.4	41.4
1⅜	¾	Deltex Medical♦	¾	...	...	-4.7
48⅜	15⅜	e-Therapeutics♦	20½	+½	...	...
230	82½	Eco Animal Hlth♦	112½	-1½	0.8	13.6
79½	30	EKF Diagnostics♦	43⅛	-1¾	2.3	12.2
56	24⅝	Futura Medical♦	56	+4	...	...
5010	2234	Genus	3012	-14	1.0	53.5
1828½	1296	**GSK**‡	1449⅜	+5½	5.5	16.7
⅞	⅜	Gunsynd♦	⅜	...	...	4.1
320	246⅛	**Haleon**	320	-1	...	...
2241	1190½	Hikma Pharms	1528	+11½	2.5	11.4
539	134½	Hutchmed China♦	228½	-16½	...	...
...	...	Immunodiag Sys♦	378	...	0.5	...
8	2	ImmuPharma♦	2	...	...	-0.6
7025	1060	Indivior	1788	-22	...	...
126½	54½	Inspiration Health♦‡	54½	...	1.1	8.4
61	26	IXICO♦	26	...	...	8.3

Equity prices Business

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
501½	294½	Mediclinic Int	497	-¾	...	31.0
8	1½	N4 Pharma♦	1⅞	...	...	-2.2
88.42	72.84	Novartis	CH84.62	-1.51	3.2	9.5
33	2¼	Omega Diags♦	3⅞	...	...	-1.5
22½	4¾	Ovoca Bio♦	4¾	...	...	-1.3
1236	297	Oxford Biomedica	363	-8½	...	16.3
6¾	2	Physiomics♦	2⅝	...	...	...
5⅝	3¼	Proteome Scies♦	4	...	...	...
6808	5450	**Reckitt Benck**	5760	-78	3.0	...
136	31⅞	RUA Life Sciences♦	44	-7½	...	-4.2
295	70	Sareum Hldgs♦	70	-2½	...	...
1338½	984½	**Smith & Neph**	1105	-20	2.4	25.0
254½	206	Spire Hcare	221	-2½	...	...
212½	16⅜	Synairgen♦	16⅝	+¾	...	-0.7
½	¼	Tissue Regenix♦	½	...	...	-7.2
47½	27¾	Totally♦	35⅞	+½	1.4	56.7
495	292	Tristel‡	390	...	1.6	80.4
42	10⅜	ValiRx♦	10⅞	-1	...	...

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
181	54⅝	Accsys Tech♦	64¾	-1½	...	...
5928⅞	3353	BASF	3993⅝	-123¼	6.9	7.8
5845½	3914⅜	Bayer DM50	4400¼	-136⅝	3.8	51.3
335	46½	Biome Tech♦	80	...	...	-2.6
4½	1⅞	Byotrol♦	1⅞	...	...	...
7¼	6¼	Camb Gbl Timber♦	6⅝	...	...	-9.0
81⅞	50⅞	Coats Grp	69	+⅛	2.0	15.4
10410	5908	**Croda**	6884	-132	1.3	30.0
1475	825	Cropper (James)♦‡	880	...	...	26.8
146½	87⅝	Elementis	117½	-1	...	...
36	13⅝	Hardide♦	13⅞	...	...	-2.6
2360	1721	Johnson Math‡	2102	-3	3.3	26.5
1950½	1309	**Mondi**	1437	-31½	3.5	10.9
87½	75	Robinson♦	80	...	6.8	...
401⅜	241⅜	**Smith (DS)**‡	313¾	-12½	3.8	17.8
695⅝	427⅝	Swire Pacific	695⅝	-10½	2.2	...
26½	11¼	Symph Environ♦	11¼	...	...	...
417⅝	88	Synthomer	133½	-2½	12.9	2.7
2487⅝	1847⅜	Takeda Pharm	2487⅝	+7⅛	4.6	13.9
8	4½	Velocys♦	4⅞	-⅛	...	-6.1
2478	1576	Victrex	1615	-10	3.6	19.2
651	500	Wynnstay Group♦	610	...	2.4	14.0
443	233	Zotefoams	315	+17	2.0	18.9

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
312⅝	86⅛	888 Hldgs	89⅞	-¼	12.3	6.6
874	542	Accesso Tech♦	790	-2	...	20.8
670	370	Best of the Best♦	420	+20	1.1	4.6
1588⅝	501⅞	Carnival	620⅝	-15½	...	-1.0
140	98½	Celtic♦	111½	...	...	11.0
49⅞	1⅞	Cineworld	4½	-⅛	...	-0.1
465⅞	215⅜	Domino's Pizza	292½	+1	4.1	14.9
1728	1075½	**Entain**	1368	-27½	...	30.6
12175	7614	**Flutter Ent**	11595	-345	...	...
36⅜	22	Gaming Realms♦	25⅞	...	...	...
290	290	Heavitree♦	290	...	...	17.4
200	140	Heavitree A♦	140	...	...	8.4
145	115	Hermes Pacific♦	145	...	...	...
5338	4193	**Intercont Htls**	4869	-69	...	45.6
1½	⅞	Minoan Gp♦	1	...	...	-7.4
266⅜	102	Mitch & Butlers	133	+1⅞	...	...
312	92½	On The Beach	145⅞	+10	...	-7.6
1600	1180	PPHE Hotels	1210	+15	...	-9.8
168	52⅝	Rank Grp	80⅝	-½	...	10.8
106⅞	26⅝	Restaurant Gp	26⅝	-1	...	-5.0
35½	21½	Rotala♦	33½	-½	...	...
40	15½	Sportech♦	19⅞	...	...	...
303⅝	184⅜	SSP Group	229⅞	+⅞	...	-4.4
6¼	3¼	Tasty♦	3½	+¼	...	4.7
305	47½	Tintra♦	260	+5	...	-4.5
294⅝	105⅝	TUI	135⅞	...	...	-1.4
3¾	1⅛	Webis Holdings♦	1⅛	...	...	...
973	389⅝	Wetherspoon JD	420¼	-5⅝	...	-3.9
3243	2285	**Whitbread**‡	2652	-23	...	...
1660	870	Young & Co - A♦	1062	-4	...	...
890	564	Young & Co - N/V♦	640	+10	...	...

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
½	⅛	7digital Gp♦	⅜	...	...	-3.1
87½	44½	Aeorema Comms♦	80	...	...	22.1
35	20½	Altitude Group♦	32½	...	...	...
98	72	Arcontech Grp♦	79	...	3.4	10.9
428⅝	176⅛	Ascential	193⅞	-7⅞	...	...
740	486⅛	**Auto Trader**	550¾	-13	0.9	27.1
492	328	Bloomsbury Pub	458	+13	1.9	18.8
10⅞	3¼	Bonhill Group♦	8	...	...	...
120	47½	Catalyst Media♦	119½	...	...	...
¾	⅜	Catenae♦	⅜	...	...	-0.3
1090	269	Daily Mail‡	270	-2½	8.9	10.3
195	100	DCD Media♦#	100	-30	...	5.0
71½	43	Ebiquity♦	44½	...	...	...
1466	829	Euromoney In Inv	1460	+2	0.7	...
3830	1145	Future	1276	-5	0.1	21.9
1425	930	GlobalData♦	1185	...	1.4	58.6
115	46¾	Hyve Group	72½	+1	...	...
288½	46½	IG Design Grp♦	114½	-9	7.5	16.7
624	475⅛	**Informa**	621	-1	...	...
123⅝	55⅛	ITV	74⅜	-2⅛	...	8.0
11½	7¼	Jaywing♦	8¼	...	...	...
12¼	2½	Live Company Gp♦	2⅞	...	...	-0.6
...	...	Mediazest♦	...	...	...	-5.5
47½	34	Merit Grp♦	35	...	...	...
74	30	Mirada♦	30	-5	...	-1.3
70	42	Mission Group♦	45	...	5.1	7.6
225½	167	Moneysupermarket	191⅛	-2⅛	6.1	19.5
1938	1223⅞	News Corp A	1481⅞	-47	1.0	24.1
1960⅞	1249⅛	News Corp B	1505⅛	-48⅛	0.9	24.5
1458	755	Next 15 Comms♦	975	-33	0.7	...
995⅛	571⅞	**Pearson**	921⅞	+8⅞	2.1	44.0
107	58	Photo-Me	107	+5	...	18.6
4¾	2	Primorus Inv♦	2⅞	...	...	5.2
175½	108½	Quarto	115	-½	...	6.4
285½	67	Reach	95¾	-1½	7.3	...
2¼	⅛	REACT Grp♦	1	...	...	15.0
2449	2071	**Relx**	2324	-16	2.0	30.6
800⅝	445⅝	**Rightmove**	543½	-16⅛	0.8	30.7
155	80½	SpaceandPeople♦	80½	-1	...	...
360	247	STV Group	270	-8	3.5	6.5
467	137½	System1 Group♦	145	+5	...	6.9
3601	2305½	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2550⅝	-51⅞	1.3	13.9
3277⅞	2174½	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2389	-47⅜	1.4	13.1
...	...	Vela Tech♦	...	...	...	6.6
318	205	Wilmington	310	+2	1.9	19.7
1224	725⅜	**WPP**	813⅜	-18⅞	3.2	15.4
123½	71	Zinc Media♦	87½	...	...	-5.5

Natural resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1¼	⅜	ADM Energy♦	⅝	...	...	...
5¼	...	Advance Energy♦#	⅜	...	...	-0.1
49⅞	17⅜	AFC Energy♦	20	-⅜	...	...
...	...	Afentra PLC	...	...	...	...
¼	...	Alba Mineral Res♦	⅛	...	...	-2.0
1	⅜	Alien Metals♦	⅜	...	...	...
117⅞	67¼	Alumina	86⅛	+½	5.3	17.9
1¼	½	Aminex	1	...	...	-6.1
3⅞	⅝	Amur Mins Corp♦	1⅛	...	...	...
12043½	5428⅞	Anglo Amer Plat	6454¼	-262⅛	7.5	4.6
4170½	2547½	**Ang Am**	3114½	-18	5.7	6.1
120½	64	Anglo Asian Mng♦	84½	...	6.8	7.3
1781½	991½	**Antofagasta**	1458	-1½	3.6	15.0
5¼	2¼	Arc Minerals♦	3⅛	...	...	2.3
4⅞	2½	Ariana Res♦	3	-¼	...	4.1
⅞	⅜	Arkle Resources♦	½	...	...	-1.9
5⅜	1⅞	Armadale Cap♦	1⅞	...	...	...
2⅞	⅜	Asiamet Rsrcs♦	1⅛	...	...	...
448	188	Atalaya Mine♦	313	-2	9.3	3.9
¼	...	Baron Oil♦	⅛	...	...	...
17½	3⅞	Beowulf Mining♦	4¼	...	...	...
⅝	...	Bezant Res♦	⅛	...	...	-1.9
3019	2034	BHP Group	2524	+17½	...	11.0
6⅞	½	Border & Sthn Pet♦	1⅜	...	...	...
49¼	14⅝	Bougainville	15⅞	...	...	...
4¾	1⅞	BowLeven♦	1⅞	...	...	-2.4
501⅜	323⅝	**BP**‡	465⅜	-3⅝	3.3	16.9
30⅝	8⅞	Cadence Min♦	9	...	...	0.9
3½	1⅛	Cadogan Petrol	2⅛	...	...	30.5
1250	825	Caledonia Mining♦	915	-26	3.7	8.9
253⅝	179⅞	Capricorn Energy	248⅝	-1½	...	1.9
5¼	2¼	Caspian Sunrise♦‡	4	...	...	...
109⅝	74⅞	Centamin	109⅛	+¾	4.7	16.9
284	200½	Cent Asia Metals♦	246½	+4	6.5	7.2
20	9⅞	Chaarat Gold♦#	10⅞	...	...	...
23⅞	7	Chariot Oil & Gas♦	15½	-½	...	...
10⅞	3	China Nonferr Gold♦	3⅛	...	...	...
⅝	...	Clontarf Energy♦	...	...	...	-1.4
35⅜	16½	Condor Gld♦	16½	...	...	-9.7
2	⅛	Corcel♦	¼	...	...	-0.3
77⅞	42⅝	DRD Gold	53⅛	-2⅝	7.1	6.3
1⅜	½	ECR Minerals♦	⅞	...	...	-5.6
25½	7⅜	Edenville Energy♦	7⅜	...	...	-0.5
11⅝	⅝	Empyrean Energy♦	⅝	...	...	-5.2
2090	1461	**Endeavour Mining**	1701	-2	2.8	25.3
36½	17	EnQuest	22⅛	...	...	1.4
28⅞	4⅛	Eurasia Mining♦	4⅜	+⅛	...	...
3½	1	Europa Oil&Gas♦	1	...	...	9.3
323	97½	Ferrexpo	157½	-2¾	9.1	1.2
914¾	622⅝	**Fresnillo**	853⅛	-1⅜	2.8	20.2
...	...	G3 Exploration#	28	...	...	-2.6
41½	21	Galantas Gold♦	34⅞	...	...	-5.8
8⅛	3⅞	GCM Resources♦	5	...	...	-4.1
72⅞	28⅞	Gem Diamonds	32⅛	-¼	5.7	3.3
34½	14⅞	Getech♦	15⅜	-2⅜	...	-3.7
563½	358⅜	**Glencore**	532½	-8⅞	1.6	19.5
⅞	¼	Global Petrol♦	¼	...	...	-4.2
1213⅜	613⅛	Gold Fields	851	-26⅜	3.0	13.1
12⅛	6⅞	Goldplat♦	11	-1⅛	...	8.3
11⅜	4⅛	Goldstone Res♦	4⅛	...	...	...
16⅞	7⅛	Greatld Gld♦	8	...	...	...
120½	70	Griffin Mining♦	77	+5½	...	8.5
310	168⅝	Gulf Keystone	199⅛	-⅜	4.2	12.4
530	298⅝	**Harbour Energy**	312½	-1	...	36.5
25⅞	5⅞	Harland & Wolff Gp♦	18	-⅜	...	1.4
147⅛	51⅝	Hochschild	66⅞	-3½	4.6	6.4
173	85	Horizonte Minrls♦	142	...	...	...
18⅛	5	Hummingbird Res♦	6	...	...	-6.9
356½	144⅜	Hunting PLC	295	+31	1.9	-7.5
106½	12⅞	IGas Energy♦	19⅛	+2⅜	...	-0.9
½	⅛	Independ Res♦	⅛	...	...	-0.1
317	228	Indus Gas♦	264	...	...	27.3
1⅜	¼	Ironveld♦	¼	...	...	-4.2
406½	79⅞	ITM Power♦	91	-4⅜	...	...
17½	10⅛	Jubilee Metals♦	10⅞	...	...	8.6
3⅜	1⅜	Karel Diamd Res♦	2⅛	...	...	-8.9
1⅜	½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	⅝	...	...	-2.9
526	380⅝	Kenmare Res	419	+2	2.6	4.8
39⅛	5⅞	Lamprell#	8⅞	...	...	-0.7
30⅞	11⅞	Landore Res♦	14⅞	+¾	...	-3.3
⅝	⅜	Lansdowne O&G♦	⅜	...	...	...
21	14	Leeds Group♦	14	...	...	-2.2
6⅛	1⅞	Lexington Gold♦	5⅛	...	...	...
20½	2⅝	MC Mining♦	13	...	...	-2.7
1⅝	⅜	Metals Explorn♦	1⅛	...	...	2.0
⅝	⅛	Nostra Terra♦	¼	...	...	-1.5
8⅞	2	Nostrum O&G	2	-⅛	...	...
229⅛	218⅞	Oil Search	218⅞	-5⅜	0.1	60.3
¼	⅛	Oilex♦#	⅛	...	...	-3.7
⅜	...	Oriole Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-1.5
1	½	Ormonde Mining♦	⅝	...	...	-2.5
17⅛	6	Orosur Mining♦	6	-¾	...	-9.0
24	16	Pan African Res♦	16¾	-⅜	4.9	5.5
149½	69⅞	Pantheon Res♦	81⅛	-3¾	...	...
79	34⅜	Parkmead Grp♦	57	-3½	...	-4.9
⅝	⅜	Pathfinder Mins♦	½	...	...	-4.3
134	68⅛	Petra Diamonds	96⅛	-1	...	3.2
4	1⅛	Petrel Resources♦	1⅛	...	...	-6.8
4⅝	1⅝	Petro Matad♦	3⅛	-⅛	...	...
157⅞	77⅞	Petrofac	77⅞	-1⅞	...	-2.0
4⅝	¼	Petroneft Res♦	¼	...	...	-0.9
21¼	⅞	Petropavlovsk#	1⅛	-⅛	...	1.6
7½	3½	Phoenix Global♦	6½	+⅛	...	-1.6
10	1⅞	Plexus Holdings♦	1⅞	...	...	-0.4
1327½	92	Polymetal Intl	247⅝	-3½	39.4	...
772	499	Porvair	642	+2	0.7	24.6
12½	3⅞	Prospex Energy♦	11⅜	...	...	...
22	8½	Proton Motor Power S♦	13⅛	-¾	...	-2.4
4	1⅜	Providence Res♦	3⅛	...	...	29.0
2¾	1	Quadrise Fuels Intl♦	1⅞	...	...	-7.5
40½	3⅜	Rambler Met&Min♦#	5⅝	+¼	...	0.1
⅜	...	Reabold Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-4.0
⅝	...	Red Rock Res♦	⅛	...	...	-1.8
7077	4859	Rio Tinto Ltd	6254⅝	-56⅝	7.9	6.5
6225	4486	**Rio Tinto**	5657	+35	8.8	5.9
41½	33	San Leon Energy♦	37	+⅜	...	13.8
⅞	⅜	Scirocco Energy♦	¾	...	...	...
60½	22⅝	Serabi Gold♦	29½	...	...	4.0
450	228½	Serica Energy♦	288½	+1½	1.2	...
12½	6⅞	Shanta Gold♦	9⅛	-⅜	1.1	5.7
2526½	1573⅞	**Shell**‡	2289⅛	-6½	2.6	12.0
2⅞	⅜	Sound Energy♦	⅞	...	...	6.0
⅜	...	Sunrise Resources♦	⅛	...	...	...
¼	...	Tertiary Minerals♦	⅛	...	...	-3.9
⅞	¼	Thor Mining♦	¼	...	...	-1.8
5157¼	3697⅛	Total Eng SE‡	4824	-71⅝	4.7	11.0
⅝	⅛	Tower Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-3.3
62⅜	35⅝	Tullow Oil	35⅝	-½	...	3.5
...	...	UK Oil & Gas♦	...	...	...	-2.0
460	135	URU Metals♦	175	...	...	5.6
2¼	⅛	Vast Res♦	⅛	...	...	...
5½	2⅝	Victoria Oil&Gas♦#	3⅛	...	...	-1.8
5	2⅛	W Resources♦#	2⅝	...	...	-0.3
8⅛	2⅛	Westmount Engy♦	2⅛	...	...	-0.6
251⅜	104½	Wood Grp (J)	131⅛	-1⅝	...	-5.3
8	1⅝	Woodbois♦	1⅝	...	...	6.4
7	1⅞	Xtract Resources♦	1⅞	...	...	-3.4
7⅞	4	Zephyr Energy♦	5¼	-⅛	...	-6.7

Professional & support services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4280	2240	4imprint Grp	4260	+20	0.2	71.8
555	457	Andrews Sykes♦	475	...	4.9	15.1
6328	3359	**Ashtead**	4871	-122	0.9	23.7
36½	3⅞	Asimilar Group♦	3⅞	...	...	0.2
170	58	AssetCo♦‡	69	...	...	0.4
50½	36	Avisen♦	48½	...	...	...
148	100	Begbies Traynor♦	142	+1⅝	2.1	...
245	155	Blancco Tech♦	176½	...	...	63.2
3163	2575	**Bunzl**‡	2941	-57	1.8	22.3
46	20⅛	Capita	24⅛	-⅜	...	1.8
51⅛	39⅜	CEPS♦	39⅛	...	...	-8.9
130	89	Christie Group♦	117½	...	...	50.0
1969½	1507½	**Compass**	1902½	-22½	0.7	46.2
370	97	CPPGroup♦	117½	...	25.5	...
92	53⅞	Croma Security♦‡	59½	-1	3.3	8.5
6486	4250	**DCC**	4250	-64	3.7	14.0
160⅛	73	De La Rue	76⅛	+1⅜	...	10.0
3400	2158	Diploma	2836	-106	1.5	50.7
1060	597	Discoverie‡	772	-31	1.3	63.2
52	23⅛	Driver Group♦	24	-1	6.2	11.4
357	175⅛	Essentra	231½	-2	2.2	26.0
3667	2285	**Experian**	2906	-78	1.2	37.2
13305	8680	Ferguson‡	10280	-345	1.7	15.1
250	210	FIH Group♦‡	250	...	...	...
150½	53⅞	Gattaca♦	72½	-1	2.0	...
6⅞	4⅛	Grafenia♦	5½	+¼	...	-4.1
610	317	Hargeaves Serv♦	430	-5	1.6	4.5
1195	608⅞	**Homeserve**	1195	...	2.1	...
655	413	Impellam Grp♦	595	...	...	32.5
42¾	4	Ince G♦	6¼	...	...	3.5
5782	3619	**Intertek**	4050	-56	2.6	22.7
302	115⅝	IWG	157⅛	-¾	...	-6.0
162	77	Johnson Srvce♦	92⅞	+1⅝	...	58.0
137½	99	Journeo♦	107½	-3	...	24.1
112⅜	56½	Kier Gp	60⅞	+¼	...	5.9
1400	1080	Latham (J)♦	1250	+17½	1.7	6.8
1085	695	Lok'n Store♦‡	980	+10	1.5	29.7
3850	2300	Lon Security♦	2700	+230	2.9	14.8
440	220	LSL Prop Services	256	...	...	7.1
135⅛	86	Macfarlane	109	+3	2.5	12.6
385	185	Maintel Hldgs♦	190	-5	...	5.8
3450	8⅛	Malvern Intl♦	12	...	...	...
224	182	Mears Group	197	...	1.2	17.1
608	262	Menzies (John)	607	-1	...	48.0
79⅞	46⅞	Mitie Gp‡	73	-1⅞	...	36.5
13⅞	3⅞	MobilityOne♦	6⅛	-½	...	5.0
41½	25	Newmark Sec♦	33	...	...	-8.2
8	3⅜	Norm Broadbent♦	3⅜	...	...	-7.0
66½	44⅛	Northern Bear♦	46½	-½	...	4.7
286	193	NWF Grp♦	254	+1	2.8	...
663	362⅞	PageGroup	453⅜	-8½	1.0	12.2
73	47½	PCI-PAL♦	53	...	...	...
13	8⅛	Petards♦	9⅞	...	...	17.7
26½	16⅛	PHSC♦	16⅛	...	6.0	30.0
4½	⅞	PowerHouse Egy♦	1	...	...	-1.8
93	61	Record‡	93	+½	2.4	25.5
440½	283½	Redde Northgate‡	415	-6	3.7	10.4
872	555	Renew Hldgs♦	681	-6	1.9	16.8
851	489	Renewi	582	-3	...	12.3
635⅝	444½	**Rentokil Itl**	532½	-1½	1.4	37.7
494	315	Restore♦	352½	...	0.7	41.9
485	331½	Ricardo	474	+4	1.4	42.3
862	440	Robert Walters	490	-14	3.3	11.2
20	11½	Roebuck Food Grp♦	13	...	...	1.9
239	92	RPS Group	220	-1	0.1	...
1241	812	**RS Group**‡	929½	-23½	2.7	23.5
43½	17½	RTC Group♦	17½	-½	...	...
654	264⅝	RWS Hldgs♦	347½	+6⅛	2.6	31.8
457	350	Science Group♦	390	+10	1.0	17.9
188¼	121⅜	Serco Gp	155⅞	-1⅞	1.4	6.3
47	27½	Smiths News	47	+⅜	1.0	4.5
4168	2452	**Smurfit Kappa**	3036	-64	3.2	13.8
65⅞	36⅛	Staffline Gp♦	39⅞	...	...	30.3
546	317⅝	SThree	393½	-1	2.0	12.7
137½	90	Synectics♦	111½	...	...	...
34½	20½	Thruvision Group♦	22	...	...	-8.0
106	39⅛	Tribal♦	39⅛	-⅝	3.0	12.2
102½	49	Vianet♦	66	-½	...	...
980	660	Vp‡	685	+3	3.6	16.8
3½	1	Westminster♦	2	...	...	-2.4

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
110½	37⅞	AO World	55⅜	-⅝	...	...
644	295½	**B&M European**‡	410⅜	-1⅜	4.2	9.5
44	20⅛	Brown (N)♦	26½	-1¼	...	7.8
77	40⅞	Card Factory	77	...	...	...
2315	1549	CVS Group♦	2094	...	0.3	58.6
265	104⅜	DFS Furn‡	150⅜	-½	4.9	8.0
1434	670½	Dunelm	960½	-3½	3.6	12.9
949½	562⅛	**Frasers Group**	742½	-16½	...	33.0
3416	1673	Greggs	2404	+14	0.6	21.0
364	124⅝	Halfords‡	190⅞	-4⅜	2.6	6.3
942½	480⅜	Howden Join	578½	-13	2.3	10.9
928	647	Inchcape	815½	-5½	1.6	27.5
6⅛	1⅝	IQ-AI	2	...	...	-5.7
225	89⅞	**JD Sports**‡	118⅞	-2⅝	0.2	14.3
356	203	**Kingfisher**	233⅝	-6¼	5.1	5.8
101	61⅞	Lookers	75⅞	+¼	...	4.8
256⅞	93⅝	Marks Spencer	120⅝	-1½	...	92.6
19¼	6	Mothercare♦	7	-½	...	-4.3
680	75⅛	Naked Wines♦	110	+2¼	...	...
8426	4383	**Next**‡	5742	-180	...	10.9
1722	393	**Ocado Gp**	660	-28⅛	...	...
28⅜	17⅞	Pendragon	17⅞	-¼	...	5.5
474⅝	257⅞	Pets at Home‡	272⅛	-3	2.9	11.1
320	72⅞	Saga	113¼	+2⅞	...	...
299	169⅞	**Sainsbury J**‡	218¼	-2⅝	4.8	18.3
1708½	1132½	Smith WH	1500½	-37	...	...
32½	14⅝	Sosandar♦	23⅛	+½	...	...
2⅝	1⅜	Stanley Gbbns♦	1½	...	...	-1.6
169½	103	Studio Retail#	115	-2½	...	2.4
156	69⅛	Ted Baker	109⅞	...	...	...
303⅜	199⅝	**Tesco**	223½	-2⅝	4.0	11.3
68	38	Topps Tiles	49	+⅞	...	8.8

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
155	62½	Access Intell♦	62½	-½	...	-8.6
161	81½	Aferian plc♦	101	-¼	2.9	18.1
199	137	Alfa Financial	161	+½	0.6	25.2
22½	8¼	Allied Minds	13⅞	+3⅛	...	-1.2
589	290	Aptitude Software	355	...	1.5	39.8
721	465	Avast	716½	-3½	1.6	28.5
3415	1924	**Aveva Gp**	3209	...	1.2	...
206½	126½	Bango♦	197½	...	...	...
84	21⅛	BATM Adv Coms	22⅞	-⅜	3.2	9.5
34	8⅞	Berkeley Res	16⅞	...	...	-6.9
30⅞	11⅞	Blackbird♦	15⅛	+1⅞	...	...
1⅞	⅞	CloudCoCo Group♦	1	...	...	-2.6
2978	1810	Computacenter	1950	-52	2.8	12.1
96	65½	Concurrent Tech♦	81	+½	3.1	19.2
14½	9¼	Corero♦	9¼	-¼	...	...
2450	1340	Craneware♦‡	1950	-25	1.4	88.9
3	1⅜	Crimson Tide♦	2½	-⅛	...	16.6
24⅞	11⅜	CyanConn Hldgs♦	12⅜	-⅜	...	...
357½	221	D4t4 Solutions♦‡	238	...	1.1	28.2
⅞	...	DeepMatter Gp♦	...	...	...	-0.1
24	13	Dillistone Group♦	14½	...	...	-4.2
1¼	⅛	EQTEC♦	⅛	...	...	-3.3
1280	599	FDM Group	752	-34	5.7	26.1
16⅜	9	Filtronic♦	14½	...	...	39.1
2450	1230	First Derivts♦	1480	-96	...	...
738½	315⅝	GB Group♦	315⅝	-7⅛	2.0	24.0
183	136	GreshamTech	173	...	0.4	...
193	30	Ilika♦	30	...	...	-8.5
132½	71½	Ingenta♦	116	-3½	1.2	67.8
80½	38	Intercede♦	55	...	...	18.9
200	112⅝	Iomart♦	119	-7½	5.9	13.0
53	28⅛	IQE♦	49¼	-1⅞	...	...
179	115½	K3 Business Tch♦	129	...	...	-2.2
2307½	1063⅞	LG Electronics	1358⅞	+130⅞	...	3.6
½	⅛	Location Sciences♦	⅛	...	...	-2.0
527	256¼	Micro Focus Intl	522¾	-⅝	3.4	-5.5
80½	45	MTI Wireless♦	55½	...	3.3	18.4
52½	17	Nanoco Gp	37⅜	...	...	...
93½	52	Netcall♦‡	89½	-1	0.4	...
67⅛	43⅜	Northamber♦‡	43½	-1	2.3	...
46	10⅛	Online Blockchain♦	16	...	...	-8.4
123½	76½	Oxford Metrics♦	98	-3	1.8	42.6
9	6	Parity♦	6¼	...	...	-9.0
40	29	Pennant Intl♦	32½	...	...	...
745½	390⅜	Playtech	505½	-9	...	5.3
394⅜	243	QinetiQ	352⅜	+8⅞	3.2	27.5
206	20½	RM	47	+3⅞	10.0	9.4
853⅜	595½	**Sage Gp**	780⅜	-13	2.2	29.9
11	5⅛	Seeing Machines♦	6⅛	...	...	...
139	74	Shearwater Grp♦	106½	...	...	65.9
85	31½	Smartspace S'ware♦	42½	...	...	-4.4
1819	1084	Softcat‡	1251	-24	1.6	24.5
286½	215⅜	Spirent Comms	267¼	-6⅞	1.7	24.8
54	24⅞	SRT Marine♦	50	-½	...	...
923⅞	472⅝	Tele. Ericsson	509⅝	-21⅛	3.6	9.2
90	70	Touchstar♦	90	...	...	...
1055	825	Tracsis♦	1000	...	...	...
24½	13½	Trakm8♦	13½	...	...	...
165	90	Triad Gp‡	90	-2½	2.2	9.8
698	222½	Wandisco♦	698	-2	...	...
1140	560	Water Intel♦	645	-5	...	35.5
273	144½	Xaar	188	+3¼	...	...
12⅞	1⅞	Yourgene♦	1⅞	...	...	-1.3
185	96⅛	Zoo Digital♦	173½	-5	...	...

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
226	102½	AdEPT Technology♦	105	-5	...	...
170⅞	107⅞	**Airtel Africa**	111	-2⅞	2.9	9.8
200⅞	114	**BT Group**	114⅜	-1⅛	...	11.1
126½	55½	Currys plc	61½	-3⅛	...	2.9
1680	1012	Gamma Comms♦	1044	-6	1.1	18.9
175	100½	Helios Towers	100⅞	-7½	...	-9.1
4350½	1103½	Just Eat T'away	1765	-105	...	-3.8
½	...	Mobile Streams♦	...	...	...	-1.6
2	⅝	Mobile Tornado♦	2	-⅛	...	...
2500	1322	Telecom Plus‡	2280	-15	2.5	58.4
139½	85⅞	**Vodafone Gp**‡	85⅞	-¼	9.0	...

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
340	220	Braemar Ship‡	297½	-5	1.6	9.8
727⅞	285	easyJet	367	+3⅞	...	-2.3
14⅞	4½	Esken Limited	5½	-⅛	...	-0.2
139½	88½	FirstGroup‡	97⅛	-1⅛	...	23.1
510	251	Fisher (James)	328	-3	...	-5.9
178¼	93½	**Intl Cons Air**	134	+2⅜	...	-2.9
526⅜	183⅛	Int Distrib Serv	206⅞	-1½	4.8	2.3
402½	262½	Irish Cont Uts	347	-31	...	...
1423	667⅛	Jet2♦	994⅜	+15⅞	...	-5.3
284⅛	143⅜	Natl Express	143¾	-10	...	-8.5
1050	820	Ocean Wilson	882½	-10	9.0	4.4
106⅛	73⅝	Stagecoach	104⅝	...	...	14.7
24½	19½	Sutton Harbour♦	22	...	...	...
424	282	Wincanton‡	336	-3	3.0	9.1
4867	1357½	Wizz Air Hldgs	2244	+20	...	-5.0

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
95⅝	66½	**Centrica**	92¼	+¼	...	9.3
258	178	ContourGlobal	250½	...	5.1	28.2
831½	473⅞	Drax Group	646	+19½	2.7	47.8
627½	484	Jersey Electricity	525	...	3.2	9.9
1245½	858⅞	**Natl Grid**‡	1020½	-7	4.8	23.7
11⅜	5⅞	OPG Power♦	5⅞	...	...	3.8
1212	755	Pennon	916½	+2½	3.5	66.4
⅝	⅜	Rurelec♦	½	...	...	-0.4
3211	2213	**Severn Trent**‡	2750	+6	3.6	...
1920	1428	**SSE**	1722	-3½	4.7	6.7
1176½	828⅛	**Utd Utilities**	1038	+1½	4.1	95.2

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ☆ figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by Morningstar.

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Composer who wrote the Twin Peaks soundtrack
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Obituaries

Tom Phillips

Idiosyncratic artist who painted Samuel Beckett, designed album covers for Brian Eno and created a masterpiece from a Victorian novel

Tom Phillips was so obsessed with creating art out of miscellaneous objects that his house in Peckham was effectively turned into a museum of curiosities. Artefacts included clumps of mud from the battlefields of the Somme, jars of his beard trimmings (shaped into two hairy skulls in *The Artist Encounters His Younger Self*) and a truncated wooden cross — picked up off the street — which he adorned with "quasi-offerings, like a sort of fetish".

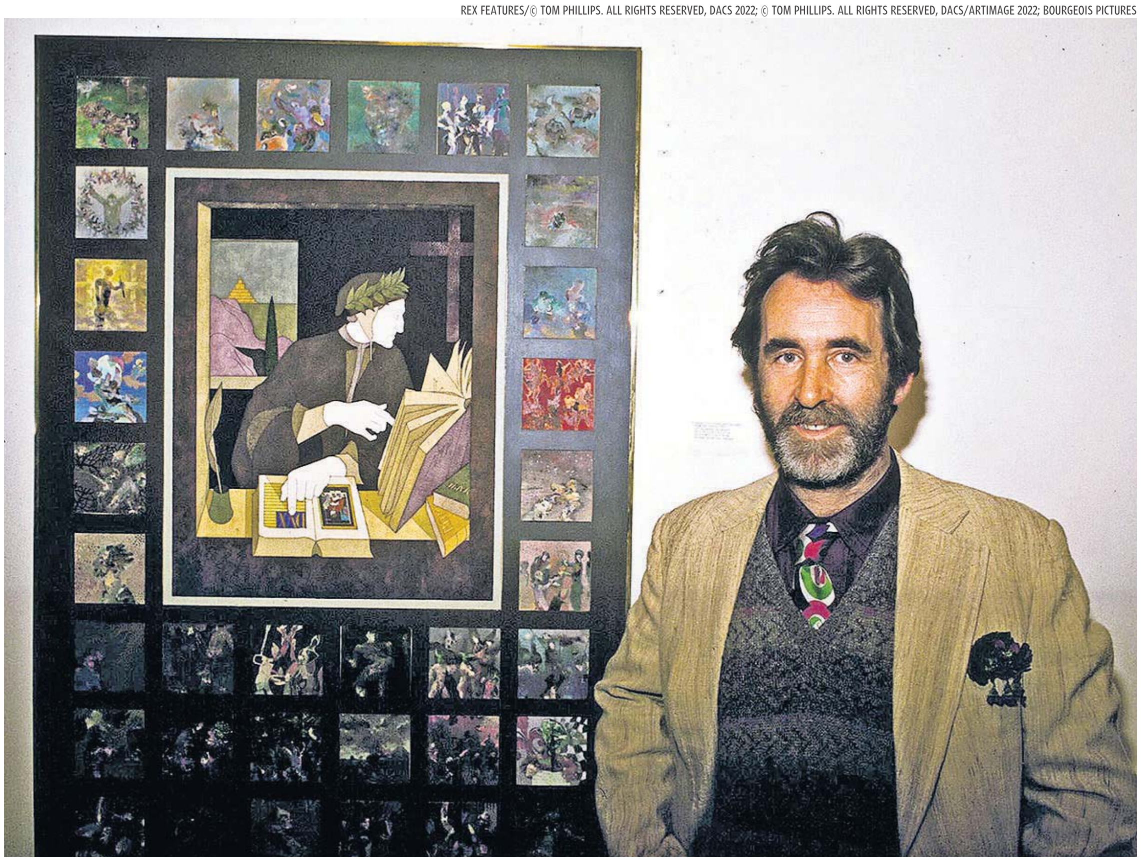
His magnum opus *A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel* came from a dusty second-hand book which he found in November 1966 at Austin's Furniture Repository in Peckham Rye. Phillips appeared in the shop in his usual garb: an old woolly jumper, mismatched crocs, carrying a rolled-up copy of The Times Literary Supplement (for which he later wrote regular reviews).

Riffling through a rack of old books he came across *A Human Document*, an obscure 1892 romance by WH Mallock. Phillips was searching for inspiration having recently interviewed William S Burroughs for The Paris Review and become fascinated by the Beat poet's "cut-up" technique, in which he rearranged chunks of prose to conjure unlikely connections.

After buying *A Human Document*

Phillips paid very little attention to traditional artistic boundaries

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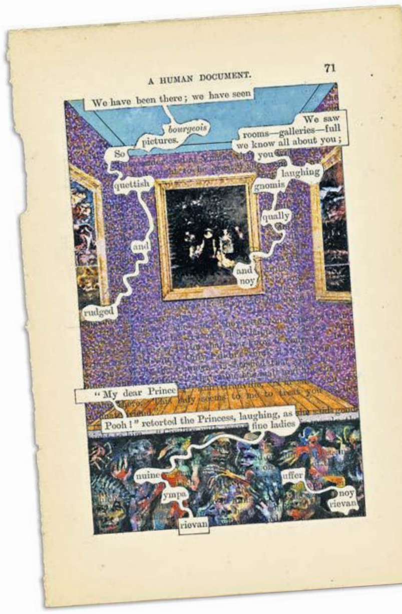


Tom Phillips in 1983 and page 71 from A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel, showing how he took inspiration from William S Burroughs by rearranging chunks of prose from an existing book to conjure unlikely artistic connections

Phillips began his own process of literary excavation, altering every page of the book to create a new work, in a project that would span more than 40 years. He crossed out certain words with ink, then painted over the page with acrylics and watercolour, and glued on photographs, postcards and cartoon-like speech bubbles to remould Mallock's chaste love story into the melancholic tale of Bill Toge (his alter ego), whose surname surfaces only sporadically when the words "together" and "altogether" appear in the original novel. Phillips was a cerebral man and the book was also peppered with allusions to the *Aeneid*, *Hamlet* and works by Ezra Pound, among others.

One Cambridge academic called it "cannibalism" but Phillips preferred the term "forgettive recycler". *A Humument* was first published in 1976 and there were six print editions. Phillips was pleased with his "strange labour", confessing in a 2012 interview with The Guardian: "Each night after midnight I consult, somewhat furtively (even though alone), the Oracle I have made. I'm often surprised by pages made long ago and almost forgotten, as well as by the sometimes uncanny predictions they offer their maker."

Phillips's career was as much of a mélange as his altered novel. He designed wine labels along with stage sets for the Globe and coins for the Royal Mint to mark the 50th anniversary of the coronation in 2003 and the 2012 Olympics; he wrote librettos and music scores for operas, was a judge for the 2017 Man Booker prize for fiction and designed an army memorial in Westminster Cathedral. He also painted mosaics in churches, designed lampposts in Peckham and illustrated reprints of classics such as Beckett's *Waiting for Godot,* TS Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Dante's *Inferno* (a gifted linguist, he translated the latter).



He paid little attention to artistic boundaries and described himself on Twitter as a "picturesmith, wordsmith and occasional musicsmith". "I'm a games player," riddled Phillips, who was also a keen ping-pong and cricket enthusiast. "My work is a kind of game. A serious game. Life's a very serious game." In his final years he liked to recite *The Seafarer* in Anglo-Saxon and quote Dante in Italian restaurants — claiming only to speak 14th-century Italian. He was also known for improvising rhyming couplets, often in song.

Once Phillips embarked on a creative project it was difficult for him to stop. Whether it was single-mindedness, ego, obsession or fear — that fertile mix of the artist — was difficult to say, but he had an almost Faustian compulsion to use his wild imagination.

For his other long-running project, *20 Sites n Years*, which began in 1973, Phillips photographed the same 20 locations in south London on the same day every spring. He appointed artistic successors and the project continues.

"Everything I use has already, in some way, been accepted by the world," he once mused. "It isn't plucked out of an ivory tower. It never is. I love the matter of human life."

In *The Seven Ages of Man* he covered a series of tennis balls with his own hair, charting its change in colour from black, via shades of grey, to white, and for *Women's Work* he collected prostitutes' calling cards from phoneboxes across London and stitched them into a quilt. In 1992 he created a series of artworks based on an imaginary serial killer called Clementine Seville ("the Peckham Peeler"), shaping orange peel into the phalluses that she had chopped off her fictitious male victims.

He was born Trevor Thomas Phillips in 1937 in Clapham, south London, the younger of two brothers. His Cockney mother Margaret (née Arnold) ran a boarding house and his Welsh father, David, owned a gas mantle factory and speculated on cotton futures. David grew rich but went bankrupt after the war, and to save the family from financial ruin Margaret, a canny woman who had left school at 14, bought a house in Peckham and rented rooms to Camberwell School of Art students. In 1961 Tom became her final boarder and lived in the house for the rest of his life, leaving his studio to have lunch each day in the same café.

During the Second World War the family received food parcels from an American aunt wrapped in comics. Phillips always recalled them: his first artwork was the cover of a Batman strip and comics later adorned *A Humument*.

At Henry Thornton Grammar School he played the bassoon and violin, sang baritone in the school choir, and often visited music halls in Brixton with his mother. After exhibiting at an open art show on the railings of the Thames Embankment, he won the London county council scholarship to study art in Paris aged 17, where he did a "bad drawing of an apple in Cézanne's studio". His creative energies were also spent playing with the Philharmonia Chorus, of which he was a founding member.

At Oxford University he continued to explore new artistic territory. Alongside his studies in English literature and Anglo-Saxon he made music, acted and designed stage sets. He also attended lectures on Renaissance art and evening drawing classes at the Ruskin School of Art. He later designed wall hangings for the dining room of his college, St Catherine's.

After leaving university in 1960 he taught English, music and art at a secondary school in Brixton — which he hated — and in the evenings went to life-drawing classes at Camberwell School of Art studying under Frank Auerbach, who was one of his greatest inspirations. In 1961 he became a full-time student there and three years later took up a post at the Ipswich School of Art, where he taught a fey boy called Brian Eno. The schoolchildren knew their dictatorial teacher as "Black Tom" because of his bushy dark hair, sombre clothes and haunting black eyes.

Eno became Phillips's painting assistant and it was Phillips who introduced him to the experimental music scene in London, though when Eno started the band Roxy Music, Phillips thought it a waste of his talents. Still, Phillips would design the cover of Eno's solo album *Another Green World* in 1975 and two years later Eno produced a recording of Phillips's opera *Irma*, which had evolved from the protagonist in *A Human Document*. Their close friendship was maintained in part through a game they invented together: "sound tennis", in which they hurled tennis balls at old pianos.

In 1965 Phillips staged his first solo exhibition. Much of the Sixties, however, was taken up with various music compositions, many of which were performed by the pianist John Tilbury.

In 1989 Phillips became only the second living artist to hold a one-man show at the National Portrait Gallery. That same year he was elected a Royal Academician, later becoming the RA's chairman of exhibitions.

He is survived by his second wife, Fiona Maddocks, chief music critic for The Observer, and two children from his first marriage to Jill Purdy. Leo and Ruth are both professional musicians.

His breadth of involvement in the arts was extraordinary. In 1985 he had worked with the director Peter Greenaway on *A TV Dante*, an adaptation of *Inferno*. He also collaborated with Harrison Birtwistle (obituary, April 18, 2022), who composed a music score to accompany Phillips's wire sculpture *Song of Myself;* in turn, Phillips wrote *Laudatio* for the composer, a verse encomium for the *Siemens Stiftung* in Munich.

In 1993 he put his own spin on a "festschrift" for Salman Rushdie, marking the fifth year of the fatwa, and painted the author's portrait the year before. There were also portraits of Samuel Beckett, Iris Murdoch (whose book covers he illustrated), the Monty Python team and Pete Townshend for The Who's album *Face Dances*.

Then there were the "living dead" collaborations, including Joseph Conrad (*Heart of Darkness* opera, 2011) and Albert Einstein in *Quantum Poetics* (2007), an abstract artwork. "There's a poetry in what I understand of Quantum Physics, which is very little of course," he said in 2012. "Although I've been at the Institute of Advanced Studies for six years now, all it does is expand enormously the scope of my ignorance."

Phillips's favourite quotation was from Henry James, which he welded into a copper tangle of words in a 2007 sculpture, *After Henry James*: "We work in the dark, we do what we can, we give what we have. The rest is the madness of art."

Tom Phillips CBE RA, artist and polymath, was born on May 24, 1937. He died of cancer on November 28, 2022, aged 85

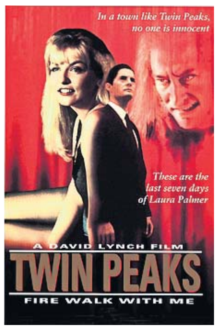
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Angelo Badalamenti

Prolific composer who collaborated with David Lynch and most famously wrote the haunting soundtrack for Twin Peaks

In David Lynch's films there are only fleeting glimpses of Angelo Badalamenti. He appears in the background and slightly out of focus in *Blue Velvet* (1986), wearing a blue tuxedo jacket and playing a grand piano while Isabella Rossellini sings the number that gave the film its title; and in *Mulholland Drive* (2001) as an espresso-drinking gangster who spits out his coffee. Yet the music Badalamenti composed for Lynch's films indelibly seared itself into the memory.

So central was Badalamenti's work to Lynch's vision that the director would invite him on to the set to play his music while filming so that the actors could "feel the mood".



Badalamenti scored no fewer than ten of Lynch's projects on the big and small screen, the most memorable of which was *Twin Peaks*, which Rolling Stone declared to be the "most influential soundtrack in TV history".

One minute eerie and unsettling and the next serene and gentle, Badalamenti's score perfectly fitted the surreal and supernatural undertone of Lynch's dramatic vision and the main theme — written for the show's murdered teenage character Laura Palmer and given the title *Falling* — won the composer the Grammy award for best pop instrumental performance in 1990.

Badalamenti worked closely with Lynch but composed without seeing the films. Instead the two men collaborated by a form of synesthesia.

"David came to my office and said 'I have this idea for a show'," the composer recalled. "He sat next to me at the keyboard and said, 'I haven't shot anything but it's like you are in a dark wood with an owl in the background and a cloud over the moon and sycamore trees are blowing very gently."

Badalamenti played what was to become the opening chord to the *Twin Peaks* theme and Lynch continued the story, describing a "beautiful troubled girl" emerging from the woods.

"I played the sounds his words inspired and the notes just came out. David was stunned, as was I, and he had tears in his eyes," he recalled.

"I'll go home and work on it," he told Lynch.

"Work on it? Don't change a note," came the reply.

He subsequently recruited Julee Cruise (obituary, June 13, 2022) — who had also sung in *Blue Velvet* — to record a vocal version of the theme and several other songs that she was seen performing in *Twin Peaks* as a singer in a bar.

In addition to the various iterations of *Twin Peaks*, which included the 1992 film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* and a new 18-episode TV sequel in 2017, Badalamenti also collaborated with Lynch on the films *Wild at Heart* (1990), *Lost Highway* (1997) and *The Straight Story* (1999).

Asked to explain how they worked together, Lynch explained that all he had to do was "talk to him about a scene and he begins to play those words on the piano. It's that simple".

It was a description with which Badalamenti did not argue. "Music and composing — I almost feel a little guilty about it — come so easily for me. It's like the well doesn't seem to run dry," he said in 2004.

Only once did he admit to experiencing writer's block when composing the torch-lighting theme for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. The melody finally came to Badalamenti while in the shower as he was getting ready to attend a friend's wedding. He hurried downstairs to his piano, "wrote it in half an hour" and still made it to the church on time.

REX FEATURES



Angelo Badalamenti on the Later with Jools Holland TV show in the 1990s and David Lynch's Twin Peaks film that featured the musician's most famous work

According to his niece Frances Badalamenti, beneath the charismatic exterior, hearty laugh and beaming smile there lurked "a melancholic complexity and a darker emotional landscape", which she believed was key to his music. For most of his adult life he made suburban New Jersey his home with his wife Lonny Irgens, an artist. They married in 1968 and she survives him along with their daughter, Danielle, a portrait artist. A son, André, who was a musician and music teacher, died in 2012.

Angelo Daniel Badalamenti was born in 1937 in Brooklyn, New York, the second of four children to Leonora Ferrari, a seamstress, and John Badalamenti, who owned a fish market. John, whose parents were from Sicily, was a good singer and an uncle, Vinnie Badale, played trumpet with the bands led by Benny Goodman and Harry James and Angelo started piano lessons at the age of eight. At New York's Lafayette High School he added the French horn to his repertoire and wrote his own processional march for his graduation, earning a scholarship to the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, before transferring to the Manhattan School of Music.

Working as a music teacher, he wrote and created a musical version of *A Christmas Carol* for his pupils. When it was filmed and shown on a local TV channel, it led to a job offer as a songwriter with a Manhattan music publisher.

Working under the name Andy Badale there were a few missteps, such as attempt to cash in on Beatlemania with a daft song called *Santa Bring Me Ringo*. His first break came in 1965 when he turned up unannounced at Nina Simone's manager's office. She wasn't there but asked if he could wait until she arrived. As there was no piano in the office he sang his compositions to her a cappella and she was sufficiently impressed to record three of them.

His first film score came in 1973 with the Blaxploitation picture *Gordon's War*. The director Ossie Davis wanted an all-black production and was set to hire Barry White but changed his mind when he heard Badalamenti's music.

However, years of struggle followed. "There was a time when money was really tight, when I considered driving a New York City cab," he admitted. When he teamed up for the first time with Lynch on *Blue Velvet*, he had not worked on a film in 12 years. Initially asked to coach Rossellini, he ended up scoring the entire movie.

Away from Lynch he worked with several other A-list directors, including Paul Schrader on *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990), Jane Campion on *Holy Smoke* (1999) and Danny Boyle on *The Beach* (2000), the initial musical ideas for which he claimed to have scribbled on the back of a golf scorecard.

As an arranger or producer he was sought out by David Bowie, Paul McCartney and the Pet Shop Boys among others. He was even asked to collaborate by Norman Mailer on a country song. The result was *You'll Come Back (You Always Do)*, which with the unique writing credit Mailer-Badalamenti, was recorded by Mel Tillis for the 1987 film *Tough Guys Don't Dance*.

"I don't know if there is anything I could have done other than music," he admitted when asked how his life might have been different if he hadn't been able to make a living as a composer. "I just don't have a clue about anything else."

Angelo Badalamenti, composer, was born on March 22, 1937. He died of undisclosed causes on December 11, 2022, aged 85

Sir Simon Towneley

Scion of an ancient Catholic family, long-serving lord lieutenant of Lancashire and creator of the Northern Ballet Theatre

A descendant of the last man to be hanged, drawn and quartered in Britain, Sir Simon Towneley's recusant antecedents — Catholics who refused to attend Church of England services and gave shelter to priests — were, according to Lord Burghley, treasurer to Queen Elizabeth I, a family of "more than usual perversity".

A cultured man of wide interests who, having begun his career as an eminent musicologist, enjoyed an active and varied life, he went on to revive the historic Towneley name.

In the process, embracing all manner of causes large and small, he made a distinctive and distinguished contribution to British life. Subsequently appointed the sovereign's longstanding representative in the County Palatine, his notable cultural legacies there include the creation of the Northern Ballet Theatre in 1969. His expertise as founding chairman proved pivotal in overseeing its growth from humble beginnings to becoming the national and international leader in dance and live theatre that it is today.

About the same time, when the future of Manchester's Northern School of Music was threatened by a road-widening scheme, Towneley played a key role in steering through its amalgamation with its near neighbour, the Royal Manchester College of Music, to create what ultimately became the Royal Northern College of Music, the first new conservatoire to be built in Britain in the 20th century.



Towneley with the Queen. He was lord lieutenant of Lancashire for two decades

Simon Peter Edmund Cosmo William Koch de Gooreynd was born in 1921 at his parents' house in Belgrave Square. Because the pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski was giving a recital there at the time his mother, Priscilla Reyntiens, the granddaughter of the Earl of Abingdon, was asked to "give birth as quietly as possible". His Belgian-born father Alexander "Lexie" Koch de Gooreynd had been educated at Eton before becoming a colonel in the Irish Guards.

When standing as a parliamentary candidate, Simon's father found his name a handicap and adopted the name of Worsthorne, taken from a Lancashire village that was part of the family estate. It was the name his younger brother, Sir Peregrine, kept throughout his distinguished journalistic career, most notably as the editor of The Sunday Telegraph (obituary, October 5, 2020). Both boys were brought up by their mother who subsequently went on to marry Montagu Norman, a governor of the Bank of England.

Towneley was educated at Stowe before winning a scholarship to study at Worcester College, Oxford. The war intervened and after seeing action with the King's Royal Rifles in Italy, he was captured and served for a time as a prisoner of war. On the cessation of hostilities, he returned to Oxford to complete his education before staying at the university to lecture in music and complete his doctoral dissertation. In 1954, under the name of Simon Towneley Worsthorne, he published what has long remained a seminal text, *Venetian Opera in the Seventeenth Century*.

Upon marrying his second cousin Mary Fitzherbert in 1955, he changed his surname to Towneley, courtesy of a royal licence. Their histories were not only linked because the grandmothers of the bride and bridegroom were sisters but also because, in 1589, both John Towneley and Sir Thomas Fitzherbert had been cruelly persecuted for their Catholic faith. Settling at Dyneley Hall, the family seat in Lancashire, the couple built the smallest oratory in Britain. Mass would be said in it every Sunday by a Jesuit priest wearing the pre-Reformation vestments bequeathed by the Abbot of Whalley at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Towneley became a justice of the peace in 1956 and lord lieutenant and custos rotulorum of Lancashire in 1976. While in office for 20 years, he was also, among many other roles, a member of the Council of the Duchy of Lancaster, a director of Granada Television and a trustee of both the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and the British Museum.

Over the years Dyneley Hall would play host to numerous classical music concerts. As well as being a cello player, Towneley was also a keen gardener and a longstanding member of the International Dendrology Society. Having restored the gardens at Dyneley, he enjoyed swapping rare seeds with fellow enthusiasts worldwide. He was appointed KCVO in 1994.

He was also a keen supporter of his wife's many equestrian activities, notably the opening up of the Mary Towneley Loop, the first multi-user national trail. She died in 2001. The couple had one son and six daughters. Peregrine is chairman of the BMS Group. Of the daughters, the third, Katharine, is now better known as the successful writer Katie Grant, and it is to his fifth daughter, Cosima, that the mantle of community service has now passed. A long-serving local councillor, she is the mayor of Burnley.

According to the eulogy his son gave at his funeral, Sir Simon died "fortified by the rites of the Holy Church and a partridge and a bottle of champagne".

Sir Simon Towneley, musicologist, was born on December 14, 1921. He died on November 11, 2022, aged 100

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Court Circular

Buckingham Palace
15th December, 2022
His Excellency Mr Inigo Lambertini was received in audience by The King today and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the Italian Republic to the Court of St James's.

Ms Maria Grazia Gragnano was also received by His Majesty.

His Excellency Mr Magzhan Ilyassov was received in audience by The King and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Court of St James's.

Mrs Akmaral Aidarbekova was also received by His Majesty.

Sir Philip Barton (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs) was present.

Mrs Johanna Churchill MP (Vice-Chamberlain of the Household) was received in audience by The King this afternoon and presented Addresses from the House of Commons to which His Majesty was graciously pleased to make reply.

The King and The Queen Consort this afternoon visited London's Community Kitchen, Christchurch Avenue, Harrow, and were received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London (Sir Kenneth Olisa), the Chief Executive (Mr Mumtaz Khan), the Mayor of London (the Rt Hon Sadiq Khan) and the Mayor of Harrow (Councillor Janet Mote).

His Majesty, escorted by the Chief Executive, and Her Majesty, escorted by Ms Suzy Jakeman (Head of Projects and Partnerships), toured the facilities, viewing the surplus food market, the Cookery School and the Kind Café and meeting students, members of staff and volunteers, before officially opening Paddington Garden.

The King and The Queen Consort later attended a Christmas Carol Service held by The Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

The Princess Royal, on behalf of The King, held an Investiture at Buckingham Palace this afternoon.

Kensington Palace
15th December, 2022
The Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall this morning chaired a Meeting of The Prince's Council at 10 Buckingham Gate, London SW1.

The Prince of Wales and The Princess of Wales, as Patron of the Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, this afternoon held a Christmas Carol Service in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

St James's Palace
15th December, 2022
The Countess of Wessex this morning attended the Lord High Admiral's Divisions at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Devon (Mr David Fursdon).

Her Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Christmas Carol Service held by The Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

St James's Palace
15th December, 2022
The Princess Royal, Colonel, The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons), this morning received Colonel Crispin Lockhart upon relinquishing his appointment as Lieutenant Colonel Commanding Household Cavalry and Colonel Mark Berry upon assuming the appointment.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Luncheon at Spencer House, 27 St James's Place, London SW1.

The Princess Royal this evening attended the London International Horse Show at ExCel London, One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16, and was received by Mr. Kim Bromley-Derry (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London).

Kensington Palace
15th December, 2022
The Duke of Gloucester, Ranger, Epping Forest Heritage Trust, this morning planted a tree for The Queen's Green Canopy at Wanstead Flats, Redbridge, and was received by Mr Thomas Chan (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London).

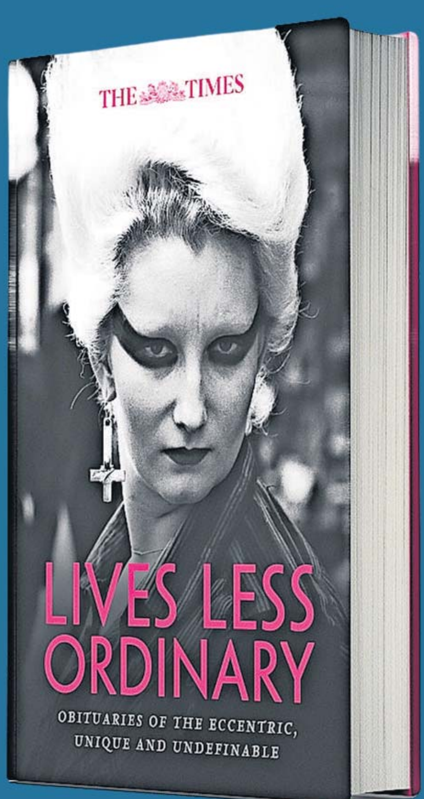
The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester this afternoon attended a Carol Service held by The Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

The Duchess of Gloucester, Honorary President, the Lawn Tennis Association, this afternoon joined a Council Meeting at the National Tennis Centre, Priory Lane, London SW15, and bade farewell to Mr. David Rawlinson upon relinquishing his appointment as President and welcomed Ms. Sandi Procter upon assuming the appointment.

St James's Palace
14th December, 2022
The Duke of Kent, Grand Master, United Grand Lodge of England, this evening attended a Meeting commemorating the Tercentenary of Royal Alpha Lodge at Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2.
15th December, 2022
The Duke of Kent this afternoon attended a Carol Service held by The Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

St James's Palace
15th December, 2022
Princess Alexandra this afternoon attended a Carol Service held by The Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

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THE idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. Psalm 135.15-18 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

GHANDHI on 14th December 2022 to Hannah (née Macdonald) and Mark, a son, Raffi Rustom, brother to Rusi.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR T. PINNELL AND MISS A. CROSS
The engagement is announced between Thomas, son of Mr Kevin Pinnell and Mrs Sarah Pinnell of Ledbury, Herefordshire, and Anna, daughter of Mr Stefan Cross KC and Dr Alison Steele of Kensington, London.

MR E.J. WOOLLEY AND MISS I.C.E. SMITH
The engagement is announced between Edward James Woolley, son of Ian Woolley of Shillingford, Devon, and Susie Anderson of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and Isabel Catherine Edmond Smith, daughter of Anthony and Catherine Smith of Slawston, Leicestershire.

Anniversaries

HAILEY : DAVIES
Huge congratulations to Robert and Rosemary Hailey as they celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. With much love from all their family on this amazing milestone!

Deaths

BALCON The Honourable Sarah Patricia (Sally) (née Mills) died peacefully on 12th December 2022, aged 89. A much-loved mother and grandmother. There will be a memorial service in the new year.

BATTLEY Paul died peacefully on 2nd December 2022, aged 90. Paul was a much-loved husband to Daphne, father to Celia and Fiona and grandfather to Holly and Alfie. He will be deeply missed. For funeral details contact celiacarling@gmail.com.

CHURCHILL, Paul died on 28th November 2022, aged 66, loving and adored husband of Sonja and father of Katya and Francesca. Flower inquiries to Chelsea Funeral Directors, 020 7352 0008.

COHEN Jane (née Karminski) died on 13th December 2022 peacefully at home. Widow of Hugh, mother to James, Charles and William. Proud grandmother of nine and great-grandmother of four. Private Funeral.

DAVIES Mary Veronica (née Agnew) died peacefully on 10th December 2022 at Treliske Hospital, Truro. Requiem Mass to be held at Wardour Chapel, near Tisbury, on Wednesday 21st December at noon. Inquiries to chriswhitefunerals.co.uk, 01722 744691.

DORNEY Richard "Skid" passed away suddenly on 18th November 2022, aged 62. Funeral service at Salisbury Cathedral on Friday 13th January 2023 at 11am followed by burial at Tidworth Military Cemetery at 1pm. All inquiries c/o S&J Maddocks Funeral Directors, 01264 355600.

EVANS Julian. It is with great sadness we announce that Julian Evans passed away on 10th December 2022, aged 89, at Whitegates Care Home, Bromyard, Herefordshire. A much-loved husband of Jane (née Cary), dearly loved father of Kate, Annabel and Juliet and devoted grandfather to his nine grandchildren. A private family cremation service will be held in Hereford and a memorial celebration will be held at a later date in Radyr, Cardiff. Further inquiries to Emma Bouston Funeral Services, 01885 489900. Donations may be made in lieu of flowers to the Alzheimer's Society.

HARRY THOMAS Elizabeth died on 11th December 2022 at home. Beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. Private family funeral.

GALTON-FENZI Eileen (née Hanmore) died on 2nd November 2022, aged 96. She is remembered with great love by her daughter Fiona, son Miles and her grandchildren Piers and Francesca. She is greatly missed.

LASKEY Peter died on 7th December 2022, aged 65. Much-loved husband, father & grandfather. Funeral All Saints Church Sandon, SG9 0QX, at 1.30pm on Wednesday 21st December.

MITCHELL Avril CR (née Knott) died peacefully on 5th December 2022, aged 92. Loving widow of Roger, much-loved mother of Nick, Janey and Boo and grandmother of Jonny, Angus, Maia and Jago.

MURPHY Joy HM (née Livermore) died peacefully at home with many of her family around her on 6th December 2022. Adored wife of the late Reverend Canon JGMW Murphy LVO, loving mummy to Maryan, Desiree, Nicola, Geraldine and Felicity and mother-in-law of Larry, Jamie, Gary, Stuart and Javier. Much-beloved grandmother, great-grandmother and special friend to so many. Her funeral service will be held on Wednesday 21st December 2022 at 11.15am at St Mary's Church, Heacham. Flowers welcome or donations, if desired, can be made to St Mary's Church, Heacham, either at the service or sent to c/o AJ Coggles Family Funeral Directors, 13 Bridge Street, Downham Market, PE38 9DW. Online donations can be made via www.ajcoggles.co.uk by following the memorygiving link.

SHOOTER CBE Adrian on 13th December 2022, aged 74. Adrian died, on his own terms, in Switzerland. He faced death with great courage, dignity and relief after his body was ravaged by motor neurone disease. Darling husband of Barbara, father to Alastair and Victoria and grandfather. Donations please to the MND Association at adrianshooter.muchloved.com where details of his memorial service will be posted when finalised.

STROUD Victor of Ridley, Kent, died on 9th December 2022, aged 96. A celebration of his life will be held at Ridley Church at 11am on 30th December. All friends and family are welcome. Family flowers only. Donations if wished to the Salvation Army

WOOLLETT Roy Perry died peacefully on 26th November 2022, aged 87. Devoted husband to Margaret (Peggy) for 63 years. Beloved father to Emma and Mary; cherished and inspiring grandfather to Henry, Arthur, Daisy and Freddy. Cricketer, painter and lover of classical music. He will be much missed.

In Memoriam — Private

KATHY FERRAR, 13.09.1944-16.12.2021 Adored wife of Val Lindsell and a dearly loved sister, aunt and friend. We carry you in our hearts. Any inquiries please contact Susan Whymark Funeral Service Ltd on 01379 851253.

Dinner

SERVICE DINNER His Majesty Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, hosted a dinner at the Dorchester Hotel, London, on Thursday 15th December for fellow members of Ypres Company Intake 40, to celebrate the 55th anniversary of their commissioning from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

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LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

To place notices for these sections please call 020 7481 4000

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 11.30am three days prior to insertion

Legal Notices

<u>ZUMRETTA UZICANIN</u>
SPINSTER, LATE OF RUISLIP,
DIED THERE ON 9 DECEMBER 2021

<u>JOHN TAYLOR</u>
LATE OF SUNDERLAND, TYNE AND WEAR
DIED THERE ON 6 DECEMBER 2020

<u>MARTIN ALBERT SMITH</u>
LATE OF BIRMINGHAM, WEST MIDLANDS
DIED THERE ON 27 APRIL 2020

The kin of the above named are requested to apply to BVD, PO Box 2119, Croydon CR90 9QU, United Kingdom DX: 325801 Croydon 51 or at www.gov.uk/bonavacantia, failing which the Treasury Solicitor may take steps to administer the estate.

Government Legal Department

Legal Notices

THE PENSION AND LIFE ASSURANCE PLAN OF MARLBOROUGH FINE ART (LONDON) LIMITED
NOTICE UNDER SECTION 27 OF THE TRUSTEE ACT 1925

To Members and others claiming a right to benefits under the Pension and Life Assurance Plan of Marlborough Fine Art (London) Limited (the Plan).

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925 that the Plan is shortly to be wound up.

The Trustees of the Plan believe that they have the names of everyone with a right to benefits, but the Trustees wish to trace anyone, including former employees (whether full-time or part-time) of Marlborough Fine Art (London) Limited or their spouse or dependant who think that they have a claim against the Plan or an entitlement or interest in the Plan and have not heard from the Trustees recently. If you think that you have a claim, entitlement or interest in the Plan please write with full details of your claim, interest or entitlement including:

- your full name;
- your address;
- National Insurance Number;
- date of birth;
- dates of employment with Marlborough Fine Art (London) (or details of the basis of your claim/interest); and
- any relevant papers to the Trustees of the Plan at the following address:

By email: Trevatt@marlboroughgallery.com

By post: Angela Trevatt, Marlborough Gallery, 6 Albemarle Street, London, W1S 4BY

You must contact the Trustees within 2 months of the date of publication of this notice.

Commencing two months from the date of this Notice, the Trustees will proceed to distribute the assets of the Plan to provide benefits for its members and beneficiaries and to complete its winding-up, having regard only to the claims, entitlements and interests of which they have prior notice. In accordance with section 27, the Trustees of the Plan will not be liable to any person whose claim, entitlement or interest they have not had notice at or before the time of distribution.

Notification is not required from persons who are currently in receipt of a pension from the Plan, or who have already received correspondence relating to the wind-up of the Plan from the Trustees.

16th December 2022

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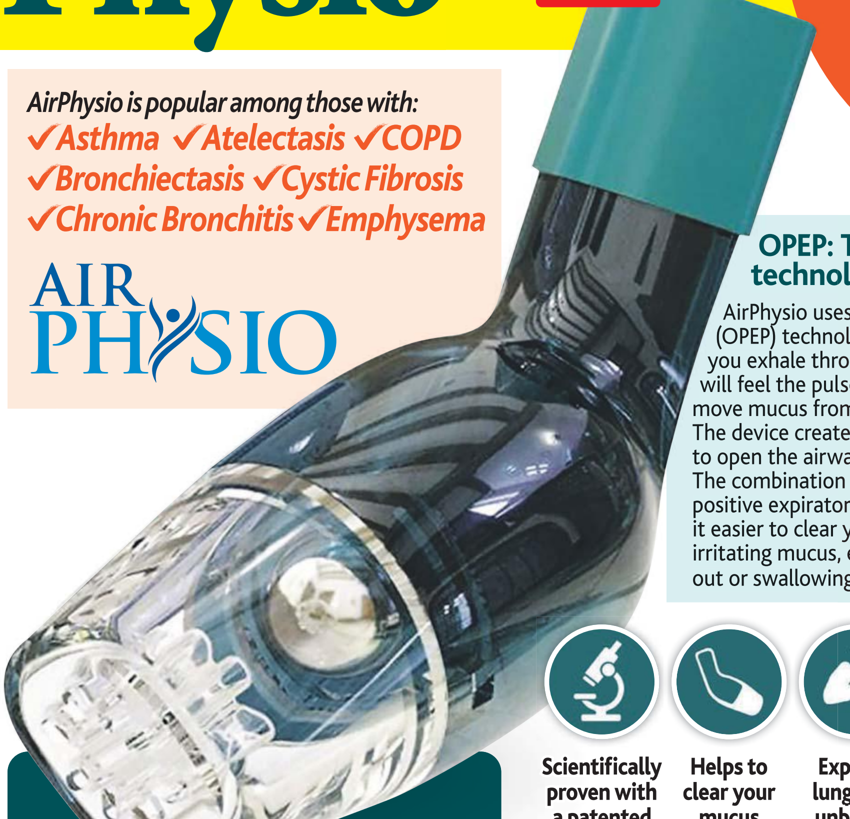
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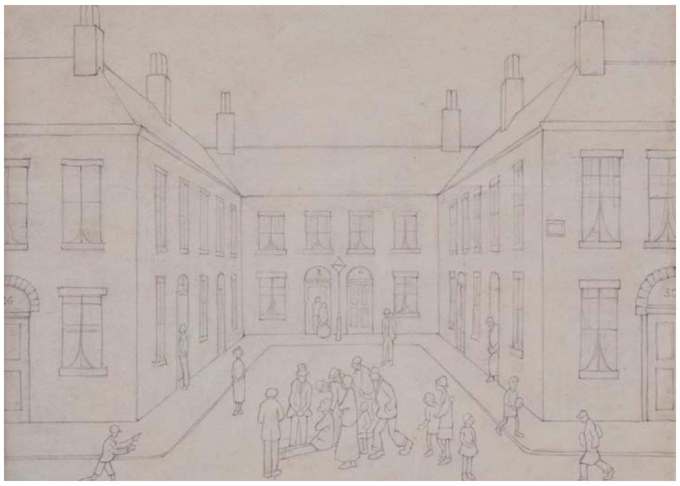

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Today Wintry showers across the north and west, dry with sunny spells in the south. Max 3C (37F), min -8C (18F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	2	PC	13.0	2.9
Aberporth	3	S	0.0	3.2
Anglesey	5	S	0.0	1.0
Aviemore	-2	PC	0.0	0.0
Barnstaple	3	S	0.0	**
Bedford	-1	S	0.0	**
Belfast	2	PC	0.2	0.0
Birmingham	-0	S	0.0	**
Bournemouth	0	S	0.0	0.8
Bridlington	3	PC	1.6	**
Bristol	-0	S	0.0	0.3
Camborne	2	S	0.0	**
Cardiff	1	S	0.0	0.0
Edinburgh	2	S	0.0	0.0
Eskdalemuir	-0	S	0.0	**
Glasgow	1	S	0.2	6.2
Hereford	-0	S	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	1	S	0.0	0.3
Ipswich	**	**	0.0	4.3
Isle of Man	5	PC	0.0	6.1
Isle of Wight	2	S	0.0	**
Jersey	4	PC	0.2	0.0
Keswick	-1	S	0.0	**
Kinloss	1	R	3.0	1.7
Leeds	-0	S	0.0	**
Lerwick	1	PC	3.4	0.0
Leuchars	3	S	0.0	0.0
Lincoln	1	S	0.0	**
Liverpool	**	**	0.0	**
London	-0	S	0.0	1.2
Lyneham	-2	S	0.0	0.3
Manchester	-1	S	0.0	0.0
Margate	1	**	0.0	**
Milford Haven	3	S	0.0	**
Newcastle	-0	PC	0.0	**
Nottingham	2	S	0.0	0.0
Orkney	1	C	2.8	0.2
Oxford	-2	S	0.0	**
Plymouth	3	S	0.0	**
Portland	2	S	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	5	S	0.0	**
Shoreham	-1	S	0.0	1.9
Shrewsbury	-0	S	0.0	0.0
Snowdonia	2	PC	0.0	**
Southend	0	S	0.0	3.5
South Uist	1	C	2.0	**
Stornoway	2	C	8.0	0.5
Tiree	5	S	3.2	0.7
Whitehaven	0	S	0.0	0.0
Wick	2	PC	1.4	**
Yeovilton	-1	S	0.0	0.0

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	16	S	Madeira	20	PC
Amsterdam	4	PC	Madrid	10	B
Athens	20	PC	Malaga	16	PC
Auckland	23	C	Mallorca	19	PC
Bahrain	24	PC	Malta	22	S
Bangkok	27	S	Melbourne	15	B
Barbados	30	PC	Mexico City	24	S
Barcelona	16	PC	Miami	27	B
Beijing	-3	S	Milan	3	B
Beirut	21	R	Mombasa	30	SH
Belgrade	8	S	Montreal	-3	PC
Berlin	-5	B	Moscow	-7	B
Bermuda	20	B	Mumbai	33	S
Bordeaux	11	DU	Munich	-2	C
Brussels	2	S	Nairobi	24	B
Bucharest	6	C	Naples	17	PC
Budapest	2	D	New Orleans	25	B
Buenos Aires	32	S	New York	3	PC
Cairo	23	S	Nice	9	R
Calcutta	26	S	Nicosia	22	PC
Canberra	17	PC	Oslo	-14	FG
Cape Town	29	S	Paris	0	S
Chicago	6	R	Perth	30	S
Copenhagen	0	S	Prague	-3	M
Corfu	20	PC	Reykjavik	-6	S
Delhi	20	S	Riga	-11	S
Dubai	28	S	Rio de Janeiro	27	PC
Dublin	1	PC	Riyadh	24	S
Faro	16	PC	Rome	15	B
Florence	10	M	San Francisco	10	PC
Frankfurt	-3	B	Santiago	29	S
Geneva	6	B	São Paulo	22	PC
Gibraltar	15	SH	Seoul	1	SN
Helsinki	-9	PC	Seychelles	30	PC
Hong Kong	14	PC	Singapore	27	B
Honolulu	28	B	St Petersburg	-7	SN
Istanbul	16	B	Stockholm	-13	S
Jerusalem	22	PC	Sydney	20	S
Johannesburg	26	PC	Tel Aviv	22	PC
Kuala Lumpur	29	PC	Tenerife	23	B
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	11	PC
Lanzarote	24	B	Vancouver	5	PC
Las Palmas	23	B	Venice	5	B
Lima	20	B	Vienna	1	B
Lisbon	15	SH	Warsaw	-4	B
Los Angeles	15	PC	Washington	4	B
Luxor	24	S	Zurich	2	M

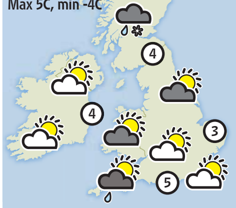
Five days ahead

An unsettled period with widespread rain and showers, perhaps turning wintry at times

Tomorrow

Dry with sunny spells across Ireland and southeast England. Bright spells and showers across northern and southwest Britain, perhaps turning wintry across Scotland.

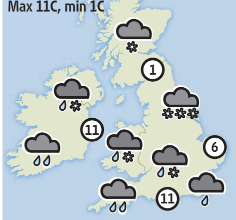
Max 5C, min -4C



Sunday

An unsettled day with a band of rain moving eastwards across the British Isles, heaviest across Ireland and perhaps wintry in places.

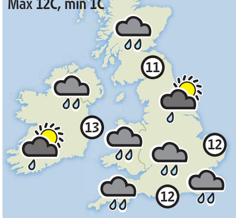
Max 11C, min 1C



Monday

Remaining unsettled and cloudy with showery rain for most, heaviest across Ireland through the morning and Britain through the afternoon.

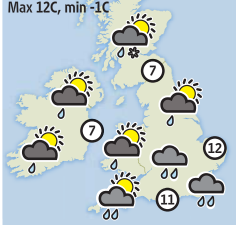
Max 12C, min 1C



Tuesday

Bright spells and showery rain across Ireland and western Britain. Patchy cloud and heavy showers in the south and east.

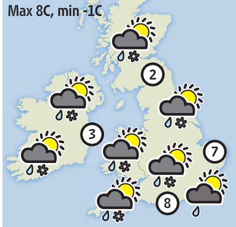
Max 12C, min -1C



Wednesday

A day of bright spells and wintry showers across much of Britain and Ireland, heaviest in eastern Scotland through the afternoon.

Max 8C, min -1C



The Times weather page is provided by Weatherquest

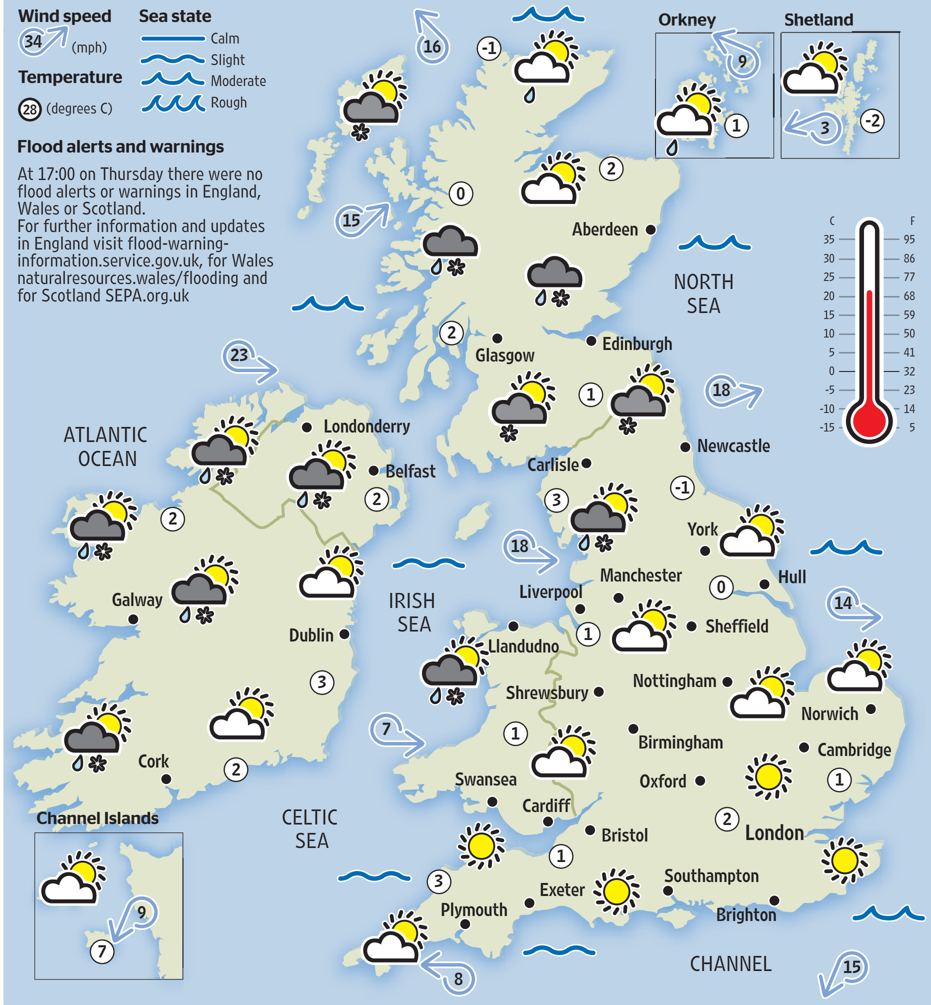
Wind speed 34 (mph)

Temperature 28 (degrees C)

Sea state Calm, Slight, Moderate, Rough

Flood alerts and warnings

At 17:00 on Thursday there were no flood alerts or warnings in England, Wales or Scotland.
For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

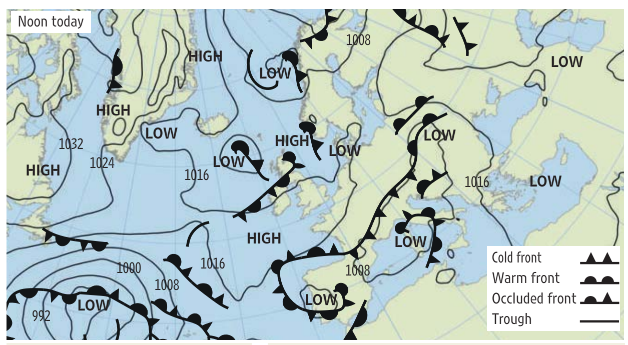


General situation: Dry and sunny in southern England, wintry showers in northern Britain and western Ireland.
SW Eng, Cen S Eng, London, SE Eng, Channel Is: Dry and frosty with lengthy spells of sunshine. Patchy mist and fog may linger through the day in places. Light and variable winds. Maximum 3C (37F), minimum -7C (19F).
N Wales, NW Eng, Lake District, Argyll, SW Scotland, Borders, Glasgow, IoM, Edinburgh and Dundee, Cen Highland, NW Scotland: Bright spells and heavy snow showers through the morning. Snow becoming lighter and less widespread through the afternoon. Light to moderate east to northeasterly winds, perhaps fresh at the coast. Maximum 3C (37F), minimum -8C (18F).
Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, N Isles: Mainly dry with sunny spells and a chance of isolated wintry showers. Light north to northwesterly winds, moderate at times. Maximum 2C (36F), minimum -5C (23F).
S Wales, W Mids, E Mids, Cen S Eng, E Eng, NE Eng: A largely dry day with sunny spells and the odd isolated wintry shower through the afternoon. Light and variable winds. Maximum 2C (36F), minimum -7C (19F).
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Early mist, fog and frost clearing to leave a largely dry day with sunny spells in the east. Wintry showers in the north and west later. Light to moderate northeasterly winds. Maximum 3C (37F), minimum -3C (27F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	06:51	3.4	18:55	3.6
Avonmouth	11:52	10.3	--:--	--
Belfast	04:25	2.9	16:33	3.2
Cardiff	11:48	9.6	--:--	--
Devonport	10:28	4.6	23:08	4.3
Dover	03:49	5.6	16:33	5.3
Dublin	05:02	3.3	17:11	3.5
Falmouth	10:13	4.3	22:55	4.0
Greenock	05:39	2.9	17:26	3.2
Harwich	04:22	3.4	17:04	3.4
Holyhead	03:28	4.4	15:43	4.7
Hull	11:30	5.9	23:28	6.1
Leith	07:54	4.5	20:10	4.5
Liverpool	04:01	7.3	16:23	7.6
London Bridge	06:13	5.9	18:52	6.0
Lowestoft	02:08	2.3	15:39	2.1
Milford Haven	11:16	5.5	23:53	5.2
Morecambe	04:14	7.2	16:36	7.5
Newhaven	03:57	5.4	16:16	5.1
Newquay	10:13	5.6	22:51	5.3
Oban	10:45	3.2	23:43	2.9
Penzance	09:44	4.5	22:21	4.2
Portsmouth	04:32	4.0	16:44	3.8
Shoreham	03:57	5.1	16:18	4.8
Southampton	03:23	3.9	15:34	3.6
Swansea	11:23	7.4	23:58	7.1
Tees	09:07	4.5	21:15	4.6
Weymouth	11:10	1.5	--:--	--



Synoptic situation

An occluded front across northern Britain will bring eastward-moving showery rain, perhaps falling as sleet and snow in Scotland and parts of northern England throughout the day. Another cold front associated with a low-pressure system to the north of Ireland will bring a few scattered showers into the Hebrides through the evening.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Magilligan, 6.5C
Coldest: Benson, Oxfordshire, -12.9C
Wettest: Aultbea, Ross and Cromarty, 31.0mm
Sunniest: Glasgow, 6.2hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 07.59
Sun sets: 15.51
Moon rises: --.--
Moon sets: 12.35
New Moon: December 23

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	15:55-08:13
Belfast	16:27-08:11
Birmingham	16:23-07:43
Cardiff	16:34-07:43
Exeter	16:39-07:41
Glasgow	16:12-08:13
Liverpool	16:22-07:52
London	16:21-07:31
Manchester	16:19-07:50
Newcastle	16:08-07:56
Norwich	16:10-07:31
Penzance	16:50-07:46
Sheffield	16:17-07:46

Weather Eye
Paul Simons



There are good tidings in the weather forecast — this Sunday is going to turn mild. No longer will early mornings ring with the grating sound of car windscreens being scraped of frost, and daytime temperatures will reach double digits in many places, possibly even as high as 15C. It is an enormous jump from the sub-zero freeze so far this December, when the first half of the month was gripped by cold air sweeping down from the north — although by comparison it has not been nearly as severe as the monstrous freeze and blizzards of December 2010 that brought chaos across the country.

The sudden change to milder conditions this weekend is thanks to the Atlantic "waking up" and delivering a great plume of warmer air to the UK, drawn up by a low-pressure weather system from the southwest loaded with tropical air.

However, a note of caution needs to be added because the mild spell is only going to be a brief interlude and temperatures are expected to drop back later next week. The large wedge of milder air is also carrying plenty of moisture that will bring some hefty downpours of rain in places — another big lurch in the weather in what has been a largely dry first half of December. And we are also not finished with the wintry conditions quite yet because the arrival of the rain could also turn to snow in some places as it runs into the colder air further north.

The weather is also going to turn much windier, and although the thermometer readings will be close to normal, it will feel colder in the wind. But at least the return of the wind is good news for wind turbines that have hardly ticked over in the calm conditions over the first half of this month.

As for the immediate run-up to Christmas, there is a good deal of uncertainty in the forecasts, and for anyone who craves a white Christmas there is nothing definite just yet. And so betting on snow falling on Christmas Day is still up in the air, quite literally.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 77 76 75

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Sport

Dry World Cup had positives – shame it was so bland and lacked atmosphere

Matt Dickinson



Senior Sports Writer

A narrative has gathered around the Qatar World Cup that a lack of booze made it safe and orderly; that women, in particular, felt less threatened than is often the norm at football; that this was a place where families could come certain that they would not be caught up in a rampage of drunken chair-chucking. And, after three weeks in Doha, I would vouch that all of that is true.

Headlines this week trumpeted a historic first: no arrests of England fans at a tournament. That had to be worth celebrating with a can of Budweiser Zero.

Extrapolate these outcomes, as some have, and they have seen the future of football and it is dry, safe, welcoming; concluding that a much-maligned World Cup has taught us a valuable lesson that football and drink are a dangerous cocktail which, increasingly, we must not mix.

I certainly think this World Cup should make us think afresh about football and booze and about an environment at our grounds where many women I know continue to feel intimidated and unwelcome. But if we are going to cite this past month in Qatar as evidence of anything, and certainly as an exemplar or pointer to a better way, then we should at least consider the full picture. While everyone in Doha would agree that the first World Cup in a Muslim country, where booze was available but restricted and expensive, did feel safe and orderly, there were other causes, effects, complexities. Perhaps even downsides.

The assumption that it was a lack of alcohol that meant everyone was wonderfully behaved — "exemplary" as Mark Roberts, chief constable of Cheshire and head of UK football policing, said of England and Wales supporters — needs to be tested against previous tournaments.

We perhaps have an assumption that England on the road guarantees trouble but at the Brazil World Cup in 2014, there were 22 arrests out of about 20,000 fans from England and the vast majority of those were for ticket touting. In Russia in 2018 there were three arrests. There was no shortage of Stolichnaya there.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER MARC ASPAND



There were no arrests of England supporters in Qatar but many fans stayed away for various reasons

There are many factors at play — distance, cost, numbers who travel, host policing, local fans — and I wonder how much we can read into a unique Middle Eastern tournament where so many England fans stayed away.

They may have been put off by fear of an autocratic state — perhaps the threat of a possible jail sentence for drinking in public — or the fact that once you have done the museum, the segregated beach and bought your souvenir shawl in the souk that it was not a host venue for tourist delights. Dull and also seriously expensive.

Most fans I spoke to were paying about £6,000 a head to attend the group stage. That was before spending more than £10 a pint in those licensed premises inside hotels.

This thinning out of the travelling numbers across most European nations gave the tournament a different, multicultural feel which was refreshing but also meant that the atmosphere for England against France — a World Cup quarter-final, an old rivalry, defending champions, a tense, even contest — was as flat as I have experienced at any comparable fixture.

After 20 minutes, a 60,000-capacity stadium was silent except for the sound of one solitary drummer. "It feels like a pre-season friendly," one of my colleagues said and while the decibels increased as the tension heightened, we should not ignore — even if Fifa can given it has made a huge profit — that thousands of fans across many nations who might usually travel decided Qatar was not for them.

This is not just an English perspective. I talked to supporters from all continents. Invariably, most were having a pleasant time but a group of Spanish fans spoke for many when they said the place felt empty outside the stadiums, lacking conviviality except for Metro journeys in a carriage of bouncing Argentinians or drum-beating Moroccans.

They were respectful of the culture and country but missed street bars and cafes. Alcohol? Well, the fact that you had to reserve a table at Doha's Red Lion for most of the tournament tells you that many grew thirsty.

This is not an argument for thousands of tanked-up fans. As someone scarred by Marseille in 1998, Charleroi in 2000, Marseille again in 2016 and countless battlegrounds in foreign cities in between, I have endured more than my share of town squares invaded by England fans singing about German bombers.

Perhaps I can offer only questions to ponder. Do we need booze to enjoy sport? Out in Doha, we frequently asked how much we missed booze in general. The UK will demonstrate spectacularly over the next few weeks just how much we binge on alcohol and perhaps nowhere more raucously than at Alexandra Palace and the World Darts Championship. It would be interesting to test a dry version; to see how the usual revellers would feel chanting in a Teletubby outfit on Diet Cokes.

Football has its own deeply troubled relationship with alcohol. To arrive home and discover that there had been 531 "football-related" incidents across the UK during the World Cup, and 115 arrests mostly around pubs, was startling after Doha's sterility.

Football's problem? As the government considers the recommendation of Tracey Crouch's fan-led review that fans should be able to consume alcohol in their seats for the first time since the dark days of the mid-Eighties, those figures may be considered. "Madness," Roberts told MPs of the proposal, saying police had not been consulted. I agree that this is not a step worth taking.

I do not need a beer in my seat — I just want to be able to buy one at half-time without a queue so long I have to guzzle it in 20 seconds. That requires changing the bar, and a woeful service culture, not the law.

Football is on constant probation from politicians and administrators — and not only for historical reasons when we recall the Wembley mayhem at the final of Euro 2020. Football brings us some of the very best communal scenes but also continues to attract the worst type of rowdiness.

Somewhere we try to find the best of all worlds but, for all the talk of safety and orderliness, I am certain I did not discover it in Qatar, which I departed wondering not just what they would do with all those stadiums but thousands upon thousands of undrunk — undrinkable? — cans of Bud Zero in fridges. Bland, one-dimensional, lacking in flavour are among the reviews. I know what they mean.

Peaty fury at 'weird' bronze

Swimming

Britain's double Olympic champion Adam Peaty was left "angered" at having to settle for a "weird" bronze in the 100m breaststroke at the Short Course World Championships in Melbourne yesterday.

The American Nic Fink claimed gold in 55.88sec, with Italy's defending champion Nicolò Martinenghi finishing second in 56.07. Peaty managed only 56.25 for third place.

"I'm angry with bronze," Peaty said. "I don't get bronze often, so it's a bit of a weird one to have on Wikipedia. It's my first competition since the Olympics last year. The Commonwealths [this summer, where he won gold in the 50m breaststroke] was just a trial really, after my foot injury."

Peaty, 27, was in second place before being passed by Martinenghi on the final 25m length as he claimed Britain's first medal of the event.

"I'm disappointed but I'm not going to allow myself to be," he said. "It is what it is. I am what I am."

Peaty is a former world record-holder in the short course 100m but has never won the world title. He holds the world record of 56.88sec for the long course 100m — two lengths of a 50m pool — set in 2019.

"I'm looking forward to a long-course season after this week and I've got to be uncomfortable — I've got to be challenged – if I'm going to challenge that world record," Peaty said. "This is the fight I need and I just feel pure anger, which is when I feel dangerous."

Britain's Tom Dean, the Olympic 200m freestyle champion, was eighth in the 100m freestyle. Australia's Kyle Chalmers took gold ahead of France's Maxime Grousset.

Mercedes role for Schumacher

Formula One

Mick Schumacher will be Mercedes's reserve driver for 2023. The 23-year-old German, son of the seven-times world champion Michael, lost his Formula One race seat when Haas dropped him in favour of Nico Hülkenberg.

In his Mercedes role he will work in the team's simulator and stand in should Lewis Hamilton or George Russell be unable to race. "I am grateful to Toto [Wolff, the team principal] and everybody involved for putting their trust in me," Schumacher said.

Earlier, Ferrari put out a statement saying they had cut all links with Schumacher, who had been a member of their driver academy since 2019. He raced for Haas for two seasons, with a best result of sixth in Austria this year.

Kenya's anti-doping pledge

Athletics
Rick Broadbent

Sebastian Coe hailed Kenya's new $25 million anti-doping fund as a "declaration of intent" as he explained why the country had escaped a blanket ban for doping.

With 55 Kenyan athletes at present sanctioned, as well as a string of pending cases, many expected World Athletics to impose a unilateral punishment at their recent council meeting in Rome. Instead, Kenya pledged $5 million (about £4.1 million) a year to address the problem, while its sports minister Ababu Namwamba went further, saying he wanted to criminalise doping and crack down on "a complex underground syndicate" of agents, doctors and coaches.

Coe, the president of World Athletics, said: "Ultimately, there is always a line in the sand, there is for any federation, but we are working well and collaboratively. We drew that line over the Russia issue [in 2015, the IAAF, as was, suspended Russia indefinitely from all competitions for state-sponsored doping] but I see the two situations very differently. I'm not dealing, as we had in the past with Russia, with conspiracy theories. The Kenyans are very conscious this is disfiguring. I've had detailed discussions with the federation at ministerial and governmental level, and the fact they are committing $25 million over five years is a declaration of intent. I'm satisfied we have all the people that matter who can resolve this in the right space."

Between 2004 and 2018 some 138 Kenyan runners failed drug tests. Eliud Kipchoge, the marathon world record holder, branded the current situation a national "embarrassment".

Kempton Park

Thunderer

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5.45 Hadrianus
6.15 Ready Reckoner
6.45 Sapphire Seas
7.15 Aguaplan
7.45 Total Commitment
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2 (9) 04012 **JUNKANOO** 9 (V,BF,C) G L Moore 5-10-0 — **A Keeley**
3 (3) 003-3 **LONG CALL** J23 (D) A Carroll 9-9-9 — **J Fisher**
4 (8) 65021 **HAKU** 18 (CD) M Loughnane 3-9-7 — **Billy Loughnane (7)**
5 (6) -5310 **COPPERKNOB** 8 G L Moore 3-9-7 — **Anna Gibson (7)**
6 (5) 41410 **LET HER LOOSE** 146 (D) A Watson 5-9-5 — **T Fisher (3)**
7 (1) 20550 **GERROTS** 2 (B) H Evans 4-9-4 — **O Lewis (3)**
8 (2) 3-225 **THIS ONES FOR FRED** 27 (BF) A King 4-9-2 — **M Tabti (3)**
9 (7) 02232 **BASCINET** 8 (P) E J-Houghton 3-8-7 — **Mia Nicholls (7)**

5-2 Haku, 100-30 Junkanoo, 5-1 Dundory, 6-1 This Ones For Fred, 10-1 Let Her Loose, Bascinet, 12-1 Copperknob, 16-1 Long Call, 25-1 Gerrots.

Thunderer's choice: Haku was a commanding winner here last time. **Danger** Junkanoo.

5.45 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,346: 1m 3f) (14)

1 (10) **BALBOA** J Osborne 9-7 — **S Osborne**
2 (8) 0 **BRUNO THE RED** 27 T Dascombe 9-7 — **P-L Jamin (3)**
3 (6) **COME MUSICA** (B) M Botti 9-7 — **S Cherchi**
4 (12) 0 **COMMANDEER** 34 M Meade 9-7 — **H Crouch**
5 (3) 0 **FAIR DINKUM** 16 H Morrison 9-7 — **D Probert**
6 (9) **FOX VISION** R Varian 9-7 — **J Mitchell**
7 (4) 00 **GRAHAM** 18 R Hannon 9-7 — **S M Levey**
8 (11) 2 **HADRIANUS** 35 C & M Johnston 9-7 — **F Norton**
9 (1) 05 **ITHACA'S ARROW** 13 D F Davis 9-7 — **J Bryan**
10 (2) 06 **LAWMAKER** 32 W Jarvis 9-7 — **C Fallon**
11 (14) 35 **NEW DAYRELL** 112 W Muir & C Grassick 9-7 — **L Edmunds**
12 (5) **STAR MOOD** C & M Johnston 9-7 — **D Muscutt**
13 (7) 54 **TORRE DEL ORO** 41 A Balding 9-7 — **R Hornby**
14 (13) **CALMLY** J & T Gosden 9-2 — **R Havlin**

3-1 Hadrianus, 4-1 Fox Vision, Calmly, 6-1 New Dayrell, 10-1 Torre Del Oro, Balboa, 14-1 Star Mood, 16-1 Ithaca's Arrow.

Thunderer's choice: Hadrianus shaped a future winner when runner-up at Newcastle last month. **Danger** Fox Vision.

6.15 Nursery (2-Y-O: £2,916: 1m) (14)

1 (12) 00450 **BERWICK LAW** 20 (P) C & M Johnston 9-11 — **F Norton**
2 (4) 500 **THE ANGELUS BELLE** 31 D O'Meara 9-10 — **C Fallon**
3 (11) 406 **FINN STAR** 38 (T) S Kirk 9-9 — **R Hornby**
4 (2) 36543 **BLUE CURACAO** 10 (BF) R Hannon 9-9 — **S M Levey**
5 (9) 26534 **MAN MADE OF SMOKE** 10 (V,BF) P Evans 9-7 — **Doubtful**
6 (14) 000 **SILKY SMOOTH** 17 R Varian 9-7 — **C Noble**
7 (13) 61460 **GREAVSIE** 28 (B,D) J Osborne 9-7 — **S Osborne**
8 (1) 06005 **READY RECKONER** 16 (P) J Chapple-Hyam 9-5 — **D Keenan**
9 (3) 6600 **UNFORGETABLE MOVE** 67 (T,BF) S C Williams 9-5 — **H Crouch**
10 (7) 000 **TENACIOUSLY** 30 (T) W Muir & C Grassick 9-4 — **L Edmunds**
11 (5) 0306 **LITTLE ROMAN** 27 M Loughnane 9-3 — **D Probert**
12 (10) 000 **TOLLERTON FOREST** 176 Craig Lidster 8-13 — **P-L Jamin (3)**
13 (6) 000 **ALICEFROMUMBRIDGE** 43 R Woodman 8-8 — **A Keeley (5)**
14 (8) 0006 **SPEZIATO** 8 (P) K P De Foy 8-8 — **S Cherchi**

9-2 Blue Curacao, 6-1 Speziato, Silky Smooth, Ready Reckoner, 8-1 The Angelus Belle, 10-1 Little Roman, Greavsie, 12-1 Berwick Law.

Thunderer's choice: Ready Reckoner has hinted he can win in this grade. **Danger** Blue Curacao.

6.45 Fillies' Stakes (2-Y-O: £3,672: 1m) (14)

1 (4) **ALBANY** R Beckett 9-2 — **H Crouch**
2 (12) 4 **ALICE KNYVET** 58 H & R Charlton 9-2 — **D Probert**
3 (9) 00 **BRIGHT SIDE GIRL** 106 R Beckett 9-2 — **R Hornby**
4 (8) 0 **CHERRYHAWK** 65 D F Davis 9-2 — **J Bryan**
5 (13) **FREE LOVIN'** J & T Gosden 9-2 — **R Havlin**
6 (11) **MAGICAL SKIES** C Appleby 9-2 — **C Fallon**
7 (2) **MIDSUMMER DANCE** J & T Gosden 9-2 — **Collen Storey**
8 (1) 0 **OLYMPIC QUEST** 28 C Cox 9-2 — **J Fahy**
9 (10) **SAPPHIRE SEAS** C Appleby 9-2 — **W Buick**
10 (6) 00 **SCARLET** 18 A Newcombe 9-2 — **W Cox**
11 (7) 04 **SCENIC** 28 E Walker 9-2 — **S Osborne**
12 (14) **STORM VALLEY** A Balding 9-2 — **W Carver (3)**
13 (5) 0 **TULEKYA** 16 K P De Foy 9-2 — **D Muscutt**
14 (3) **TWIRLING** S & E Crisford 9-2 — **J Mitchell**

3-1 Sapphire Seas, 4-1 Alice Knyvet, 5-1 Free Lovin', 8-1 Magical Skies, 10-1 Twirling, Midsummer Dance, 12-1 Scenic, Albany.

Thunderer's choice: Sapphire Seas, a daughter of Frankel, is a half-sister to Symbol Of Light. **Danger** Free Lovin'.

7.15 Handicap (£7,731: 1m) (10)

1 (5) 60-50 **BEAR FORCE ONE** 28 (P,C,D) R Teal 6-9-13 — **C Fallon**
2 (9) 01-44 **NAVAL COMMANDER** 46 (C,D) R Brisland 5-9-11 — **W Carson**
3 (3) 20512 **COURT OF SESSION** 17 (D) S & E Crisford 3-9-10 — **H Burns (3)**
4 (8) 2-205 **HIERONYMUS** 17 (P,CD) G Baker 6-9-10 — **T Whelan**
5 (2) 2/21- **UNFORGOTTEN** 610 J & T Gosden 4-9-8 — **R Havlin**
6 (6) 22-13 **NOBLE ORDER** 28 (BF,CD) C Appleby 3-9-7 — **W Buick**
7 (1) 50211 **TOP SECRET** 28 (H,CD) W Muir & C Grassick 5-9-6 — **L Edmunds**
8 (4) 20012 **AGUAPLANO** 16 (P,BF,CD) M Botti 3-9-3 — **D Probert**
9 (10) 12050 **UZINCSO** 16 (CD) J Butler 6-9-3 — **D Muscutt**
10 (7) 21/5- **IRON HEART** J36 (D) A Newcombe 5-8-10 — **W Cox**

5-2 Noble Order, 4-1 Court Of Session, Unforgotten, 11-2 Top Secret, 7-1 Aguaplano, 16-1 Iron Heart, Hieronymus, 20-1 Naval Commander.

Thunderer's choice: Aguaplano's latest good effort here has been franked. **Danger** Top Secret.

7.45 Handicap (£12,885: 6f) (10)

1 (8) 32404 **HAZIYM** 86 (T,BF,D) A Carroll 3-9-9 — **S M Levey**
2 (7) 2-030 **MOSS GILL** 14 (P) E Bethell 6-9-8 — **W Buick**
3 (3) 34003 **MAY SONIC** 29 (BF,CD) C Hills 6-9-4 — **O Lewis (7)**
4 (6) 066/5 **VENTURA TORMENTA** 29 (D) R Hannon 4-9-4 — **Alexander Voikhansky (7)**
5 (2) 45440 **TIGER CRUSADE** 37 (CD) D M Simcock 5-9-1 — **C Bishop**
6 (9) 24112 **ARAMIS GREY** 37 (CD) R Guest 5-9-1 — **D Probert**
7 (5) 06000 **TOLSTOY** 37 (H,D) S C Williams 3-8-13 — **D Muscutt**
8 (10) 25310 **SHALLOW HAL** 14 (D) K R Burke 6-8-13 — **P-L Jamin (3)**
9 (1) 02342 **TOTAL COMMITMENT** 9 (P,CD) S Hodgson 6-8-6 — **W Carver (3)**
10 (4) 50331 **TYGER BAY** 9 (B,T,CD) C Allen 5-8-5(5ex) — **T Heard (3)**

5-2 Aramis Grey, 5-1 Total Commitment, May Sonic, 7-1 Tyger Bay, Moss Gill, 10-1 Tiger Crusade, 12-1 Haziym, Shallow Hal.

Thunderer's choice: Total Commitment finished behind Aramis Grey last time. **Danger** Aramis Grey.

8.15 Handicap (£2,916: 7f) (12)

1 (1) 66004 **JOHN THE BAPTIST** 2 (B,H,T,D) M Appleby 3-9-9 — **F Larson (3)**
2 (7) 10034 **SPLIT ELEVENS** 2 (B,D) J Butler 4-9-9 — **D Muscutt**
3 (2) 60311 **ROOFUL** 44 (CD) E J-Houghton 4-9-9 — **C Bishop**
4 (3) 04624 **SENSE OF SECURITY** 15 G Baker 3-9-6 — **T Whelan**
5 (10) 00054 **DASHING RAT** 18 (B,BF) W Stone 3-9-5 — **Collen Storey**
6 (11) 06041 **ADACE** 16 (C,D) D Ivory 4-9-3 — **C Fallon**
7 (12) -0505 **DIVINE MESSENGER** 294 (V,C) Emma Owen 8-9-2 — **R Clutterbuck**
8 (6) 00640 **MONSIEUR PATAT** 28 (D) R Brisland 5-9-0 — **W Carson**
9 (5) 05504 **PLYMOUTH ROCK** 64 (T,V,D) L Carter 5-8-13 — **R Hornby**
10 (9) 006 **ROMANOVICH** 30 J G O'Shea 3-8-12 — **Gina Mangan (5)**
11 (4) 43553 **PADDY K** 18 (V) J Gallagher 3-8-10 — **Billy Loughnane (7)**
12 (8) 00040 **MISS CONNAISSEUR** 55 (P,T) B Case 4-8-9 — **Mollie Phillips (3)**

3-1 Rooful, 5-1 Dashing Rat, 6-1 Adace, 7-1 Sense Of Security, 8-1 Split Elevens, Paddy K, 14-1 Plymouth Rock, John The Baptist, Divine Messenger.

Thunderer's choice: Rooful has won her past two starts, both over this course and distance. **Danger** Paddy K.

Southwell

Thunderer

1.25 Walking On Clouds
2.00 Sweet Idea
2.35 So Grateful
3.10 Crocodile Power
3.45 Blazeon Five
4.25 Bobby Joe Leg
4.55 Final Frontier
5.25 Divine Connection

Going: standard to slow — **Sky Sports Racing**
Draw: no advantage

1.25 Handicap (£3,726: 6f) (12)

1 (6) 06342 **BLACKJACK** 15 (B,D) A Brown 5-9-11 — **Ryan Sexton**
2 (9) 13000 **ARLECCHINO'S GIFT** 65 (P,D) M Usher 3-9-10 — **Mark Winn (3)**
3 (10) 12003 **YOU'RE COOL** 11 (T,D) D Shaw 10-9-10 — **Rose Dawes (5)**
4 (12) 65505 **SOLAR PROPHET** 66 (T) G Boughey 3-9-9 — **A Farragher**
5 (7) 44525 **WALKING ON CLOUDS** 14 (BF,D) G Tuer 3-9-9 — **O Stammers**
6 (11) 06150 **PORTELET BAY** 17 (T,V,D) P Evans 4-9-9 — **Jordan Williams**
7 (4) 26400 **USTATH** 86 (BF,CD) R Fell 6-9-5 — **J Peate (3)**
8 (5) 32235 **MY BOY JACK** 11 (V,BF) K P De Foy 3-9-5 — **S Feilden (7)**
9 (1) 3635- **SUZI'S CONNOISSEUR** 368 (D) J Chapple-Hyam 11-9-0 — **Tommie Jakes (7)**
10 (3) 06452 **TAHONTA** 7 (B,D) A Watson 4-8-11 — **Sydney Cale (7)**
11 (2) 20504 **SLATE CRACKER** 17 (B) D Carroll 3-8-9 — **Z Wheatley (3)**
12 (8) 00540 **TILSWORTH JADE** 90 J R Jenkins 3-8-9 — **O McSweeney (3)**

7-2 Blackjack, 4-1 My Boy Jack, 6-1 Tahonta, 7-1 Walking On Clouds, 8-1 You're Cool, 10-1 Ustath, Solar Prophet, Slate Cracker.

2.00 Nursery (2-Y-O: £3,726: 6f) (14)

1 (8) 006 **DREAM MISSION** 20 A Watson 9-9 — **L Morris**
2 (12) 064 **SEABREEZES** 52 T Easterby 9-8 — **T Eaves**
3 (2) 66306 **TRABAJO DETECHO** 35 (P) R Fell 9-8 — **J Peate (5)**
4 (3) 050 **LADY URSULA** 31 (V) C Fellowes 9-8 — **K Stott**
5 (1) 060 **ARBAAWI** 53 S C Williams 9-8 — **J Hart**
6 (13) 00150 **KASINO** 42 (H,D) B Smart 9-7 — **H Shaw**
7 (10) 006 **STORMINGHULL** 14 N Tinkler 9-7 — **R Scott**
8 (4) 000 **NA SCOITEAR** 143 (H) Phillip Makin 9-7 — **S Gray**
9 (14) 54204 **LADYWANTAWAY** 45 R Fell 9-5 — **S James**
10 (7) 63005 **LA MIA DUTCHESSA** 63 A Wintle 9-4 — **F Marsh**
11 (11) 06303 **SMILE AND PAY** 27 (B,H) Craig Lidster 9-3 — **C Murtagh**
12 (9) 060 **FRIENDS TOGETHER** 43 R Guest 9-3 — **T Ladd**
13 (6) 0052 **OK PAL** 38 A Carroll 9-2 — **D Costello**
14 (5) 4063 **SWEET IDEA** 38 T Ward 9-1 — **H Turner**

9-2 Ok Pal, 6-1 Sweet Idea, 8-1 Arbaawi, Smile And Pay, Dream Mission, 12-1 La Mia Dutchessa, Kasino, Seabreezes, Ladywantaway.

2.35 Handicap (£5,508: 5f) (10)

1 (3) 44466 **STONE OF DESTINY** 10 (D) M Appleby 7-9-10 — **Jason Watson**
2 (9) -3464 **DOUBLE DEALING** 15 (T,BF,C) S C Williams 4-9-9 — **L Catton (5)**
3 (8) 0-000 **FAI FAI** 36 (P) C Fellowes 3-9-8 — **K Stott**
4 (6) 00421 **LA ROCA DEL FUEGO** 15 (D) G Deacon 6-9-6 — **Rose Dawes (7)**
5 (1) 35031 **TWILIGHT MADNESS** 35 (D) S Hodgson 4-9-6 — **J Hart**
6 (4) 13203 **BANG ON THE BELL** 15 (B,D) J R Jenkins 3-9-5 — **H Shaw**
7 (2) 11042 **SO GRATEFUL** 18 (BF,CD) M & D Easterby 4-9-5 — **Joanna Mason**
8 (5) 32121 **POCKLEY** 14 (B,D) Miss L Perratt 4-9-2 — **Mark Winn (5)**
9 (7) 30010 **MURBIH** 7 (D) A Brittain 3-8-10 — **C Hardie**
10 (10) 30120 **YAAHOBBY** 11 (T,D) A Brittain 3-8-6 — **JP Sullivan**

7-2 Pockley, 5-1 Twilight Madness, So Grateful, 6-1 Double Dealing, 7-1 La Roca Del Fuego, Bang On The Bell, 10-1 Stone Of Destiny, 14-1 others.

3.10 Handicap (£3,726: 1m) (14)

1 (8) 26433 **PERFECT SWISS** 14 (BF,CD) T Easterby 6-9-10 — **D Allan**
2 (1) 2-460 **ELEVEN ELEVEN** 30 (D) Jessica Macey 4-9-8 — **O Stammers**
3 (3) 10400 **RECORWOMAN** 28 (H,T) I Furtado 3-9-8 — **Elle-May Croot**
4 (6) 00-00 **LOVE DESTINY** 329 M Herrington 5-9-8 — **T Eaves**
5 (2) 0-650 **MEDRARA** 27 C Fellowes 3-9-7 — **C Hardie**
6 (4) 52056 **TESTING FAITH** 111 I Williams 3-9-7 — **D Costello**
7 (9) 33100 **NINE ELMS** 72 (B,CD) S Bowring 7-9-7 — **Jordan Williams (5)**
8 (11) 24160 **COPPER MOUNTAIN** 205 (CD) M & D Easterby 3-9-6 — **S Gray**
9 (12) 00522 **LORDSBRIDGE GIRL** 16 W Knight 3-9-6 — **K Stott**
10 (14) 03030 **ALVEDISTON** 18 (H) J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-6 — **J Peate (5)**
11 (13) 32261 **CROCODILE POWER** 20 J J Quinn 4-9-5 — **J Hart**
12 (5) 0-103 **ZEALOT** 59 (BF,D) M Appleby 4-9-4 — **Jason Watson**
13 (10) 02460 **PRINCE HECTOR** 3 (P,BF) R Menzies 4-9-4 — **Paula Muir (3)**
14 (7) 00146 **HOPEMAN HARBOUR** 16 (D) P McBride 3-9-4 — **A Farragher (3)**

4-1 Crocodile Power, 9-2 Zealot, 5-1 Lordsbridge Girl, 6-1 Perfect Swiss, 8-1 Copper Mountain, 10-1 Hopeman Harbour, 14-1 Nine Elms, Prince Hector.

3.45 Handicap (£5,508: 2m 2f) (6)

1 (2) 11500 **MUKHA MAGIC** 69 (B,T,C) G Kelleway 6-10-2 — **C Howarth**
2 (6) /5140 **CHAMPAGNE CITY** 68 B Brookhouse (Ire) 9-9-13 — **T Eaves**
3 (3) 06311 **BLAZEON FIVE** 51 R Teal 4-9-10 — **K Stott**
4 (4) 24535 **MAKETH BELIEVETH** 63 (P) Miss A Murphy 4-9-10 — **L Morris**
5 (5) 04210 **FLINT HILL** 49 (D) Ruth Jefferson 6-9-10 — **G Lee**
6 (1) 0466 **SHADOWFAX** 16 M Appleby 3-8-13 — **J Hart**

6-5 Blazeon Five, 5-1 Shadowfax, Flint Hill, 6-1 Maketh Believeth, 7-1 Mukha Magic, 12-1 Champagne City.

4.25 Handicap (£4,536: 7f) (14)

1 (11) 65-05 **LETMELIVEMYLIFE** 126 (D) S Curran 4-9-9 — **A Kirby**
2 (4) 64600 **FLASH THE DASH** 70 (D) M Dods 3-9-9 — **C Beasley**
3 (9) 44513 **ANIF** 7 (CD) M Herrington 8-9-9 — **P Mulrennan**
4 (3) 06000 **WAR IN HEAVEN** 14 (P) M Appleby 3-9-9 — **Jason Watson**
5 (10) 11134 **ONE MORE DREAM** 9 (D) J J Quinn 3-9-6 — **J Hart**
6 (2) 24310 **YOSHIMI** 27 (D) M Herrington 5-9-5 — **T Eaves**
7 (8) 05010 **ELIGIBLE** 31 (V,BF,CD) M & D Easterby 6-9-5 — **Joanna Mason**
8 (5) 41400 **SYCAMORE** 7 (C) S Dixon 5-9-4 — **D Swift**
9 (1) 63364 **MARAYEL** 55 (W) S Lycett 3-9-4 — **O McSweeney (5)**
10 (12) 53455 **GIVE A LITTLE BACK** 34 S Curran 3-9-2 — **K Stott**
11 (6) 00664 **SURPRISE PICTURE** 13 (V) K Dalgleish 4-9-1 — **B Garritty**
12 (14) 10506 **CODE PURPLE** 31 (D) B Haslam 3-9-1 — **G Lee**
13 (13) 21506 **BURABACK** 3 (D) Jessica Macey 3-9-0 — **Mark Winn (5)**
14 (7) 11102 **BOBBY JOE LEG** 7 (B,CD) R Carr 8-8-9 — **JP Sullivan**

9-2 Anif, 11-2 One More Dream, 13-2 Eligible, 8-1 Bobby Joe Leg, War In Heaven, 10-1 Surprise Picture, Marayel, 12-1 Letmelivemylife, Yoshimi.

4.55 Handicap (Div I: £3,726: 7f) (14)

1 (12) 22001 **MARTIN'S BRIG** 7 (B,CD) D Thompson 5-9-11(5ex) — **D Allan**
2 (1) 12300 **WILLING TO PLEASE** 14 (D) P Kirby 5-9-10 — **J Williamson**
3 (8) 45553 **EBURY** 18 (BF) S Dixon 6-9-9 — **L Morris**
4 (2) 04230 **MINHAAJ** 7 (T) B Ellison 5-9-9 — **B Robinson**
5 (4) 35110 **LIBERTY BREEZE** 20 (D) Simon Whitaker 4-9-7 — **P Dennis**
6 (7) 06233 **FINAL FRONTIER** 7 (H,D) R Carr 9-9-7 — **J Hart**
7 (13) 5-500 **BANPHRIONSANALUAS** 15 (P) Alice Haynes 3-9-6 — **T Hammer Hansen**
8 (3) 06404 **KRAKEN FLORIDA** 128 (P) J Wainwright 3-9-4 — **Z Wheatley (5)**
9 (6) 50026 **PLANTATREE** 92 A Carson 3-9-3 — **P Mulrennan**
10 (9) 05400 **MISS ANACO** 85 S Bowring 3-9-2 — **Jordan Williams (5)**
11 (11) 43300 **THE GAME OF LIFE** 243 (D) M Herrington 7-9-0 — **T Eaves**
12 (5) 60000 **KRYSTAL MAZE** 34 (C) O Pears 4-9-0 — **JP Sullivan**
13 (10) 06000 **FLOATS ON AIR** 11 (V) I Furtado 3-9-0 — **J Haynes**
14 (14) 40506 **BRAVE DISPLAY** 7 (B,E,D) P McEntee 8-9-0 — **K Stott**

5-2 Martin's Brig, 7-2 Ebury, 9-2 Final Frontier, 8-1 Minhaaj, 10-1 Plantatree, 12-1 Liberty Breeze, 14-1 Miss Anaco, 16-1 Willing To Please.

5.25 Handicap (Div II: £3,726: 7f) (14)

1 (9) 41062 **DIVINE CONNECTION** 18 (B,D) Craig Lidster 5-9-10 — **O McSweeney (5)**
2 (11) 20530 **HIGHLAND QUEEN** 42 B Smart 3-9-9 — **H Shaw**
3 (8) 13026 **BACK FROM DUBAI** 57 (BF,CD) S Bowring 5-9-9 — **Jordan Williams (5)**
4 (10) 64564 **NIGHT TRAVELLER** 147 A Carroll 3-9-9 — **L Morris**
5 (2) 34050 **ELETTARIA** 11 J Wainwright 3-9-7 — **Z Wheatley (5)**
6 (3) 24500 **THAAYER** 18 (D) M Herrington 7-9-6 — **T Eaves**
7 (14) 02005 **WRITTEN BROADCAST** 52 (P,D) O Pears 5-9-4 — **H Russell**
8 (4) 03000 **LUCKY LUCKY LUCKY** 53 N Tinkler 3-9-3 — **A Jary (7)**
9 (1) 34036 **FAST DANSEUSE** 11 R Hughes 3-9-2 — **F Marsh**
10 (12) 60000 **VALORANT** 3 (B,E,D) S Dixon 4-9-1 — **P Dennis**
11 (5) -0040 **ROARING ROSA** 92 (H) I Furtado 3-9-0 — **J Hart**
12 (7) 60520 **BRAZEN ARROW** 7 (B) C Dunnett 4-9-0 — **D Allan**
13 (6) -0060 **CARAMELLO** 139 D Brooke 3-9-0 — **S James**
14 (13) 00200 **TOM TULLIVER** 116 (C) S Dixon 5-9-0 — **Elisha Whittington (5)**

3-1 Divine Connection, 4-1 Fast Danseuse, 5-1 Back From Dubai, 6-1 Night Traveller, 10-1 Brazen Arrow, Written Broadcast, Highland Queen, 14-1 Thaayer.

Results

Football

Cinch Scottish Premiership

Rangers (1) **3** — **Hibernian** (2) **2**
Sakala 15, Jack 58, Morelos 62 — Porteous 8, Nisbet 16

Friendly match Aston Villa 0 Villarreal 1.

Women's Champions League: Group C Arsenal 0 Lyon 1.

Cricket

First Test match: Bangladesh v India

Chattogram (second day of five): Bangladesh, with two first-innings wickets in hand, are 271 runs behind India

India First Innings (overnight 278-6)	
S S Iyer b E Hossain	86
R Ashwin st N Hasan b Miraz	58
K Yadav lbw b Islam	40
U T Yadav not out	15
Mohammed Siraj c Rahim b Miraz	4
Extras (lb 1, nb 2, p 5)	8
Total (133.5 overs)	**404**

Fall of wickets 1-41, 2-45, 3-48, 4-112, 5-261, 6-278, 7-293, 8-385, 9-393.
Bowling E Hossain21-2-70-1; Ahmed 20-3-43-1; Al Hasan 12-4-26-0; Islam 46-10-133-4; Miraz 31.5-6-112-4; Ali 1-0-7-0; Shanto 2-0-7-0.

Bangladesh First Innings	
Najmul Hossain Shanto c Pant b Siraj	0
Zakir Hasan c Pant b Siraj	20
Yasir Ali b U T Yadav	4
Litton Das b Siraj	24
Mushfiqur Rahim lbw b K Yadav	28
*Shakib Al Hasan c Kohli b K Yadav	3
†Nurul Hasan c Gill b K Yadav	16
Mehidy Hasan Miraz not out	16
Taijul Islam b K Yadav	0
Ebadot Hossain not out	13
Extras (b 6, lb 3)	9
Total (8 wkts, 44 overs)	**133**

Khaled Ahmed to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-0, 2-5, 3-39, 4-56, 5-75, 6-97, 7-102, 8-102.
Bowling Siraj 9-1-14-3; U Yadav 8-1-33-1; Ashwin 10-1-34-0; K Yadav 10-3-33-4; Patel 7-3-10-0.
Umpires M A Gough (Eng) and S I S Saikat.

Second women's T20 international West Indies v England

Bridgetown, Barbados (England won toss): England beat West Indies by 16 runs

England		(balls)
D N Wyatt b Fletcher	20	(19)
S I R Dunkley c Henry b Matthews	43	(43)
†L Winfield-Hill c Ramharack b Matthews	4	(8)
*H C Knight st Knight b Ramharack	18	(14)
M E Bouchier st Knight b Matthews	24	(15)
A N Davidson-Richard not out	7	(7)
K H Brunt c Fraser b Williams	7	(11)
S Glenn not out	10	(3)
Extras (b 4, w 4)	8	
Total (6 wkts, 20 overs)	**141**	

C E Dean, L K Bell and F R Davies did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-36, 2-47, 3-76, 4-116, 5-117, 6-131.
Bowling Matthews 4-0-15-3; Henry 3-0-31-0; Ramharack 4-0-26-1; Fletcher 4-0-20-1; Alleyne 1-0-12-0; Fraser 2-0-15-0; Williams 2-0-18-1.

West Indies		(balls)
A A Alleyne c Brunt b Davies	16	(14)
*H K Matthews b Dean	1	(6)
†K Knight b Dean	12	(20)
R S Williams b Dean	8	(8)
D Joseph st Winfield-Hill b Glenn	3	(8)
S A Campbelle lbw b Brunt	15	(16)
C A Henry c Wyatt b Bell	13	(14)
S Gajnabi not out	17	(16)
A S S Fletcher c Davies b Bell	18	(13)
C A Fraser not out	6	(5)
Extras (b 2, w 14)	16	
Total (8 wkts, 20 overs)	**125**	

K Ramharack did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-21, 2-23, 3-31, 4-48, 5-50, 6-78, 7-82, 8-119.
Bowling Brunt 3-0-18-1; Bell 3-0-21-2; Davies 3-0-16-1; Dean 4-0-22-3; Glenn 4-0-22-1; Davidson-Richards 3-0-24-0.
Umpires P A Gustard and L A Reifer.
● England lead five-match series 2-0

Darts

Cazoo PDC World Championship

Alexandra Palace, London: First round M Mansell (N Ire) bt B Robb (NZ) 3-1; G Sampson (SA) bt K Barry 3-1; N Rafferty (N Ire) bt J Wattimena (Neth) 3-2.

Golf

DP World Tour AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open

Grand Baie: Leading first-round scores (South Africa unless stated): **62** S Valimaki (Fin). **64** O Bekker. **65** P Pineau (Fr). **66** J C Ritchie. 67 Ko Jeong-weon (Fr), C Bring (Den), N Lemke (Swe). **68** J Schaper, D Erickson (US), B Bawden (Eng), T Detry (Bel), A Del Rey (Sp), A García-Heredia (Sp). **69** O Strydom, A Venter, L Rowe, M Rohwer, D Mostert, C Jarvis, R van Velzen, M Southgate (Eng), J Brun (Fr), J Guerrier (Fr), J Fahrbring (Swe), R Gouveia (Por).

Ice hockey

Viaplay Challenge Cup

Quarter-final, first leg Nottingham 3 Belfast 2.

Snooker

BetVictor English Open

Brentwood Centre, Essex (England unless stated): **Second round** B Hawkins bt M Fu (HK) 4-2; M Williams (Wales) bt M Selt 4-0; A Hugill bt Pang Junxu (China) 4-2; M Gould bt R O'Sullivan 4-1; A Carter bt J Lisowski 4-2; S Murphy bt A McGill (Scot) 4-2; L Brecel (Bel) bt S Donaldson Scot) 4-1; J Astley bt Zhao Xintong (China) 4-0. **Third round** N Robertson (Aus) bt R Day (Wales) 4-2; J Trump bt T Un-Nooh (Thai) 4-2; Williams bt Hawkins 4-2; Hugill bt Gould 4-1.

Fixtures

Football

Sky Bet Championship Birmingham v Reading (8.0).

Women's League Cup: Group D Lewes v Bristol City (7.0). **Group E** Coventry Utd v Reading (7.0).

Rugby union

Heineken Champions Cup: Pool one (8.0): Bordeaux-Bègles v Sharks; Leinster v Gloucester.

European Challenge Cup: Pool one Brive v Connacht (8.0); Glasgow v Perpignan (8.0). **Pool two** Lions v Stade Français (5.30).

Racing results

Southwell

Going: standard/slow

2.03 (4f 214yd) 1, **Brownlee** (L Edmunds, 5-1); 2, Sugar Hill Babe (80-1); 3, Girlswannahavefun (28-1). 10 ran. 1¼l, ½l. T D Barron.

2.33 (4f 214yd) 1, **Thrilla In Manila** (G Lee, 11-1); 2, The Tron (3-1); 3, Brandy Station (12-1). 12 ran. NR: Baileys Bling. Nk, nk. P T Midgley.

3.03 (1m 3f 23yd) 1, **Uther Pendragon** (T Fisher, 7-2 fav); 2, Selfish Brian (9-2); 3, King Athelstan (50-1). 14 ran. ½l, nk. J S Moore.

3.33 (2m 102yd) 1, **September Power** (D Allan, 5-1); 2, Got Bright (33-1); 3, Tiger Spirit (50-1). 9 ran. NR: Kitten's Dream, Reset Button, Sociologist. ¾l, 1l. M Wigham.

4.05 (6f 16yd) 1, **Rocking Ends** (W Carson, 11-2); 2, Elegant Charm (5-2); 3, Havana By The Sea (7-1). 8 ran. 2¼l, nk. B R Johnson.

4.35 (6f 16yd) 1, **Blind Beggar** (T Ladd, 5-1); 2, Total Commitment (11-10 fav); 3, Aberama Gold (11-4). 5 ran. NR: Bellagio Man. Nk, 2¼l. M Appleby.

5.05 (6f 16yd) 1, **Politics** (J Watson, 6-5 fav; **Thunderer's nap**); 2, Triggered (10-1); 3, Claim The Stars (9-1). 12 ran. NR: Dark Shot, East Street Revue. 1¼l, 1¾l. M Appleby.

Placepot: £308.20. **Quadpot: £26.20.**



‘Saracens an inclusive club? They didn’t look out for me’

Lyon’s Joel Kpoku tells **Will Kelleher** he’s fired up to face old team – and urges more English stars to move to France

If ever there was an example showing the benefits of a player expanding his horizons by moving abroad, it is the Englishman in Lyon, Joel Kpoku.

The 23-year-old lock is something of an unlikely success story, an outlier, but living proof that flying the nest can work — a path since trodden by several of his compatriots.

In November last year, Kpoku decided to leave Saracens after scant appearances in a well-stocked pack at the London club. He had offers at home that he did not fancy, so decided to go to France and join Lyon, the Top 14 side.

His parents, Joseph and Claudia, were born in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, before moving as teenagers to London to study, so Kpoku speaks French. But still it was a daring move.

“It was very, very scary,” he says, a little more than a year on. “I left Sarries still with two years on my contract. I decided to terminate my contract, effectively. Due to various admin and visa issues, I didn’t actually get out there [France] until December due to my visa being declined the first time and then having to reapply again.

“The time came when the visa got accepted and I literally packed my bags the night before, got on a plane and effed off to France.

“I found myself in France like, ‘OK, don’t know anyone here…’ I had the team manager holding a board with my name on it — ‘This is real now, I’m in France’.

“I was injured, as well, at the time, so I wasn’t actually playing. It was like, ‘You are here now. Your new journey is about to commence.’ But looking back, it has made me the person I am today.”

Kpoku went where many others have since followed, to the rich lands


Kpoku, centre, says he was constantly and unfavourably compared to Itoje, right

> “I was always compared to Maro — but here I am told to be myself and play my own game

of French club rugby, where, increasingly, younger Englishmen now play, such as Zach Mercer and rafts of former Wasps including Jack and Tom Willis and Paolo Odogwu.

He did not leave because he was out of work, though. He left, and this is again where he is an outlier, because he disliked Saracens. It is rare for anyone to leave that club and talk of their negative experiences, but Kpoku does.

His Lyon side meet Saracens in the Heineken Champions Cup either side of Christmas, and whether or not Kpoku plays tomorrow in France or next month at the StoneX Stadium, he is seriously fired up.

“Words can’t describe the excitement and the fire in my belly to come up against these guys,” he says. Does he speak to his old team-mates much? “No, to be quite honest, I don’t speak to anyone at the club.”

Was that a conscious decision? “Nah it’s nothing like that, it’s just they didn’t make the effort to contact me, so I didn’t see the point in me doing the same.

“As an insider there at the time you think it is a very inclusive club and whatnot. Not to bad-name them but as an outsider that speaks volumes doesn’t it? In terms of the lads not even looking out for me.

“Culturally, being in it is great. Being outside it…I learnt a few lessons, shall we say, at the club.”

Kpoku has a brother, Jonathan, who also left Saracens and is now at Bourgoin in France, and another, Junior, who stayed in the club’s academy and is in the under-17s.

For Joel, the departure has been a chance to remove his considerable 6ft 6in frame from the shadow of Maro Itoje. “I was always compared to Maro,” he says. “I was always told, ‘Look at what he does, look at this, look at that.’ At this club [Lyon], the coach said, ‘Just be yourself. I wouldn’t have got you here if I didn’t think you were good enough. Play your own game.’ ”

In Lyon he has benefited hugely from more game time, and was part of the team’s victory in the Challenge Cup over Toulon in May. Kpoku struggled in France initially, always finding excuses to come home to Stevenage, but the flanker Jordan Taufua took him under his wing, and he is now settled, with his girlfriend living with him.

Being across the Channel means his dream of playing for England is on hold, though. Kpoku rubbishes that directive that prevents players plying their trade abroad from representing the national team. “I’d like the rule to be abolished,” he says. “I’m abroad and experiencing all these different cultures. Look at South Africa with the amount of players that are playing overseas, all across the globe, playing rugby and still being successful.

“I think England can replicate that themselves also, in terms of allowing players to go overseas and playing the best rugby, experiencing different cultures — not just because the money’s good, but also experiencing a different brand of rugby that they have never played before.

“For any young player that’s thinking of wanting to leave, on the brink of England, do it. Go off and do it. Honestly, it would probably be the best thing for you, because you could always come back.”

Kpoku, however, is not keen to leave France anytime soon. He has made a strong impact on the field, and wants to make a difference off it, too. He plans to set up a sporting foundation in Congo to try to inspire youngsters there to take up rugby in the way he did.

“I didn’t realise how much admin it takes,” he says. “Kit, venues, cones, balls, bibs, boots, everything. There’s a lot to it, which is why it is a gradual thing that is going to take a long time.

“I had various conversations with my cousin, whose sister’s husband is friends with the president.

“Speaking to him, he said, ‘I think this is a great opportunity for you to bring rugby across the Congo.’ Obviously all they know is football. To bring a different sport into the country would be massively beneficial. It is only a couple of years that I’ve been speaking to him and we’ve had conversations about it, and now I am actually going to Congo to try to get it going.”

If Kpoku could catapult the presently unranked Congolese to a World Cup, that really would be an horizon well and truly expanded.


Kpoku has thrived since joining Lyon

Daly at No 15, Steward and Watson out wide – my England back three


Stuart Barnes

A few small steps from Anthony Watson, one giant accelerative stride and he was away; through the Ospreys defence and under the posts for a try that was the difference between winning and losing for a weakened Leicester Tigers side in Swansea last Sunday. The dazzling try capped a performance that overflowed with conviction and confidence. He was decisive every time he touched the ball, whether frequently beating the first Ospreys chaser from full back or claiming complete aerial dominance.

This was Watson at — or near — his very best. Swallows and summers and all that but if he maintains this form he will waltz back into the England team with that soft-shoe shuffle of his. Leicester played him at No 15 in the first round of European fixtures but with Freddie Steward to return as the regular England and Leicester full back, it would be a big surprise to see Watson play anywhere other than the right wing, from where he has delivered his best rugby (although such a shock is exactly what England selection requires).

Watson’s feet are as fast as any in the game. The 28-year-old has the gift of beating the initial chaser but at his previous club, Bath, he all too often ended up at the bottom of a breakdown with either slow or lost possession. In short, he didn’t visualise the broad picture anything like as quickly as he bamboozled the first would-be tackler.

On the wing, his headline role is to turn opportunities into tries. His other key tasks include kick-chases and receipts. His work rate and technique in the channel between touch and the five-metre line is good. Steward, 22, is more than good. He is outstanding beneath the high ball; 6ft 5in and about 16st, here is the very epitome of English solidity. Paradoxically, the first thing Eddie Jones’s successor should do is to turn him from an out-and-out full back into a back-three specialist. England’s former head coach was berated for moving Steward around. I criticised him often but not with his desire to make 11, 14 and 15 interchangeable positions.



Early this season Saracens put 50 points on Leicester. Mark McCall’s men froze Steward out of the game. They kicked nothing high down the centre of the field. He barely had a touch until Freddie Burns switched to full back, with Handré Pollard’s ill-fated introduction from the bench at No 10. Saracens happily kicked to Burns, the smaller Freddie unleashed a lovely pass and Big Freddie powered down the left wing to score in a game in which, until then, he had been anonymous. France, and especially Ireland, are tactically astute. There is no point in having the world’s best full back at dealing with the up-and-under if nobody kicks the ball in his direction.

Positioned on the left wing, Steward, with Watson on the right, would be able to



LOIC COUSIN/ICON SPORT/GETTY IMAGES

Lyon v Saracens
Heineken Champions Cup
Tomorrow, 3.15pm
TV: BT Sport 2

and is relishing the chance to come up against Saracens, claiming his former club's positive image is not entirely justified

Cutting through

Clean breaks in the Gallagher Premiership this season

Player	Clean breaks
Max Malins (Saracens)	9
Elliot Daly (Saracens)	7
Ollie Hassell-Collins (London Irish)	7
Cadan Murley (Harlequins)	7
Alex Mitchell (Northampton)	7
Henry Arundell (London Irish)	7
Olly Woodburn (Exeter Chiefs)	7

Source: Premiership Rugby

handle the barrage of box-kicks from opposing 22s. Steward's power and Watson's pace can also be utilised coming off the wing as either first-phase or broken-field ball-carriers. This frees England to reintroduce Elliot Daly, left, at full back. He has his critics beneath the high ball but from full back (and there is no reason not to shuffle him on to the wing and bring Steward to full back in England's own 22) the benefits of his game overwhelm the negatives.

On Monday I wrote of Brice Dulin, the La Rochelle No 15, and the role of the visionary full back. Daly is the English equivalent, with even more to his game. He has the rugby brain to spot open space and a killer of a left foot to drop the ball where he wants it from 60 metres. Daly, 30, can destroy a team with his speed of thought and accuracy of boot but there is so much more to his game.

Owen Farrell is playing wonderfully for Saracens. The presence of Daly, usually at full back, is no coincidence. The England captain has a secondary playmaker; just as Richie Mo'unga has Beauden Barrett, just as Romain Ntamack has a choice of three non-physical footballing full backs to help him and France control the game.

Jones was for so long a fan of Daly at 15. The decision to omit him from the England squad, let alone the team, was one of his worst calls for the autumn internationals. There is the goalkicking range, the gliding outside break even before the inside man passes, and the combination of experience and intellect to know where to position himself and when.

Daly and Steward should be inked into the Six Nations team. Watson has to produce a sequence of strong performances to prove Swansea wasn't a one-off. Potentially, this is a beautifully balanced back three. And then there is the youthful genius of Henry Arundell. He offers something spectacular from the bench, while the consistent finishing of Cadan Murley and the constantly improving Ollie Hassell-Collins provide exciting cover for any injuries.

Jones was right to dismiss the conservative obsession with numbers on a player's back. He was wrong to dismiss Daly. Steve Borthwick should take both the good and the bad from the end days of Eddie.

Baxter: South Africa trips need to add up

Elgan Alderman

Rob Baxter believes that the inclusion of South African sides in the Heineken Champions Cup must be economically viable for it to continue.

Harlequins played Sharks in front of a sparse crowd in Durban on Saturday in the opening round of games, and next month it will be Exeter Chiefs' turn when they take on Bulls, their opponents at Sandy Park tomorrow. Three South African sides are in the top tier of the formerly all-European competition after the country aligned itself with the United Rugby Championship, alongside teams from Ireland, Italy, Scotland and Wales.

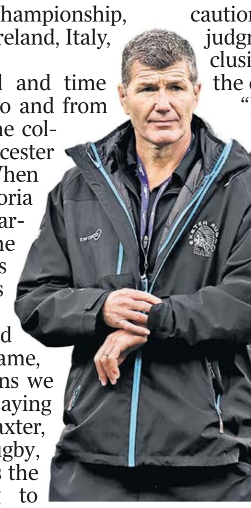
The added financial and time pressure of travelling to and from South Africa follows the collapse of Wasps and Worcester Warriors this season. When Exeter travel to Pretoria next month, they will arrive six days before the game, with organisers contributing to the costs for the visit.

"If we get a great crowd and it's a really good game, then for obvious reasons we can probably start saying there's a value to it," Baxter, the Exeter director of rugby, said. "The flip of that is the expense of travelling to South Africa for a week is big and everyone's aware of the economic climate. I think what'll have to happen is enough Premiership clubs will have to make the trip to genuinely talk about it.There's no point if the logistics and travel drain revenue from what is a good competition; then we've got to look at it seriously, because at the moment that's got to be one of those deciding factors."

Nick Evans, the Harlequins attack coach, was disappointed by the sight of a mostly empty Kings Park in Durban for their opening game, but he cautioned against making a judgment on the South African inclusion in the tournament before the end of the season.

"It was sad to see it quarter-full [last week] because I know how passionate the South African fans are," Evans said. "I hoped that there would be a lot more hurray, if that's a word, around it, and we would have gotten as many people as we could have there, but I think we just give it time.

"Let's make a decision at the end of the season around what it is."



Baxter fears the expense of trips to South Africa

RFU to reject Worcester deal

John Westerby

The RFU's board is expected today to reject the rescue package of the preferred bidders for Worcester Warriors, jeopardising their chances of returning to action in the second-tier Championship next season.

A consortium fronted by Jim O'Toole, Worcester's former chief executive, and funded by finance from the US, had been selected by administrators as preferred buyers for a club that went out of business in October, losing their place in the Gallagher Premiership.

But the RFU's club financial viability group is believed to have registered concerns about the group's financial position and ability to continue to fund the club and deliver on a business plan that includes significant development work around their Sixways Stadium.

The consortium has accused the RFU of demanding excessive control over the club's future running, and suggested it would pursue the deal to buy the club.

"We cannot accept terms that are excessive, unreasonable, unworkable and which would hinder any commercial business that is needed to support elite men's and women's rugby," a statement for the consortium read.

"The provisions [stipulated by the RFU] are not only operationally restrictive, but they are oppressive and raise the spectre of shadow directorship on the part of the RFU."

If there is no further progress, the RFU could ask the administrators to consider alternative bids.

An RFU spokesman said: "The RFU board will be meeting to discuss this matter on Friday and we won't be commenting formally on a decision which has not been made."

North 'fit for Six Nations'

The experienced Wales back George North has undergone surgery after suffering a cheekbone injury but is set to be fit for the Six Nations.

North was hurt during Ospreys' Heineken Champions Cup defeat against Leicester Tigers on Sunday, going off at half-time.

But Toby Booth, the Ospreys head coach, has delivered an encouraging fitness bulletin, claiming that North "will be good within a two to three-week period".

And that will also encourage Warren Gatland, whose opening game of his second stint as Wales head coach is a Guinness Six Nations clash against Ireland on February 4.

North, who has won 109 caps and started all four of Wales's autumn internationals last month, is set to be an integral part of Gatland's plans.

Booth said that North, 30, had an operation on Wednesday, adding: "It is a cheekbone and he's OK. All has gone well. He will be good within a two to three-week period. Any facial injury is always a worry, but he is all good.

"I have seen him this week and he has got a nice shiny black eye.

"Outside of that, he's quite buoyant, so that probably speaks volumes about how he feels."

North will miss Ospreys' Champions Cup appointment with French side Montpellier tomorrow, and also looks set to sit out the United Rugby Championship festive derbies against Scarlets on Boxing Day and Cardiff on New Year's Day.



North underwent surgery after a cheekbone injury

Sport Pakistan v England: Third Test

Whitewash would cap this

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent, Karachi



A year that began in Sydney, ends in Karachi. In between, the Ashes series was lost, the Richards-Botham Trophy was lost; a captain, coach and director of cricket were replaced and a summer of rejuvenation began, firstly against New Zealand, then India, briefly, then South Africa and now Pakistan, all swept away thrillingly. What a year of Test cricket it has been for the England team.

Some fighting spirit was in evidence in Sydney, when James Anderson batted away Steve Smith's leg spin to earn a draw, but when Ollie Robinson had his stumps dismantled in Hobart at the conclusion of the next match, a low point had been reached with a 4-0 Ashes defeat. Now, England have a chance to become the first team to inflict a whitewash on Pakistan's home soil, a remarkable transformation.

A patently unfit Robinson was emblematic of the Ashes nadir but now stands unquestionably as a first-choice pick, even when Stuart Broad returns from paternity leave. Anderson and Broad had been omitted in the Caribbean, amid endless questioning of their futures, but can look forward to a final Ashes fling in the summer as part of a seam attack that has taken 20 wickets in eight of the past nine Tests.

Joe Root, so weary and wan under the burden of leadership, has said in an interview in this month's Wisden magazine that the past six months have been the most enjoyable of his career. It is a decade now since Root first skipped out jauntily to join Kevin Pietersen in Nagpur with the words: "Eh up lad, what's happening?" and, shorn of the captaincy, that spirit of youthful optimism and fun has returned again.

A decade in England colours is a chance to take stock, and Root's career shows how the focus has shifted east, as the cricket economy has changed. When England last came to Karachi for Test cricket, 22 years ago, I was at a not dissimilar stage to Root, in my early thirties and having already played 100 Tests (albeit closer to the end). Yet, at that point, out of those 100-odd Tests, I had played one Test in India, one in Sri Lanka and none, before that tour, in Pakistan. England teams then rarely travelled east.

By contrast, Root has played 22 Tests in Asia and he has a tremendous record here, averaging more than 50. Anderson has played 28 Tests in Asia and averages only a fraction more than he does overall. This closer acquaintance with the subcontinent, increased for some players with experience in franchise competitions like the Indian Premier League and Pakistan Super League (PSL), has improved both the level of skill and knowledge in these conditions compared with earlier.

Spin holds no fear for players like Root, or indeed young Harry Brook, who has already enjoyed conditions here, through his PSL experience. Nor does taking wickets on very benign pitches hold any doubts for Anderson and his seam-bowling colleagues. They are as skilled at, and knowledgeable about, reverse-swing as the local bowlers, and indeed have outbowled the home side in this series so far.

Pakistan have been beaten on a flat pitch and a slow turner and it remains to be seen which way they will go in Karachi to try to avoid a whitewash.

That outcome would be unpalatable for a proud cricketing nation and for players who, as in India, carry high expectations every time they play. Pakistan supporters will let their feelings be known in no uncertain terms if a third consecutive defeat happens.

Their seam bowling remains hampered with the absence of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah, who has been deemed not fit with his shoulder injury. Given that, it is highly likely that Pakistan will try to engineer a similar pitch here as they did in Multan, relying on the spin trio of Abrar Ahmed, Zahid Mahmood and Mohammad Nawaz to do the bulk of the bowling.

Pakistan have got themselves into a muddle with some of their selections. It is possible to construct a stronger batting line-up with the inclusion of Shan Masood as an opener, or with the return of Azhar Ali in the middle order. Agha Salman's bowling (11 overs only) has not been used enough to keep a more specialist top-order batsman out of the side.

England have to decide whether to retain Ollie Pope as wicketkeeper, a move that has allowed them to play the extra bowler, although Will Jacks was deemed mostly surplus to requirements with the ball in Multan. Whether the extra day off afforded by the win in Multan has allowed Anderson, Robinson and Mark Wood time to recover fully remains to be seen. If not, Rehan Ahmed, the 18-year-old leg spinner, could make his debut.

With five Tests in India next winter, the focus will shift more to spin there. Jack Leach was helped by Root in Multan but essentially has carried the spin-bowling duties alone. While passing 100 Test wickets in Multan was an achievement for Leach, he is taking his wickets at 57 apiece here and memories remain of the disdain with which he was treated by Australia's batsmen.

That and the opening partnership are the only uncertainties looking ahead to the Ashes, with Ben Duckett a horses-for-courses selection here. Nevertheless, given where the team were at the start of the year, to end it with so few doubts over the composition of the team for the start of next summer, is a remarkable feat in itself.

The big one, as Ben Stokes terms the Ashes, is looming. Last week during Australia's Test against West Indies, cameras alighted on a handwritten sign in the home dressing room. "Ronball" — that was the sign, using the nickname of the Australia coach, Andrew McDonald — does not quite roll off the tongue as well as "Bazball", but the nature of England's Test cricket since leaving Hobart has been noticed. A victory in Karachi, and a whitewash, would get tongues wagging even more.

Possible teams for third Test

Pakistan (from)	Age	Tests	Runs	Bat avge	Wkts	Bowl avge
Abdullah Shafique	23	9	915	61.00	–	–
Imam-ul-Haq	26	18	1,202	37.56	0	–
Azhar Ali	37	96	7,097	42.49	8	77.62
Shan Masood	33	25	1,378	29.31	2	46.00
*Babar Azam	28	44	3,338	47.68	2	15.50
Agha Salman	29	4	190	24.00	2	104.50
†Mohammad Rizwan	30	26	1,347	39.84	70ct	2st
Faheem Ashraf	28	14	636	31.61	24	35.25
Mohammad Nawaz	28	6	144	16.00	16	31.00
Abrar Ahmed	24	1	24	24.00	11	21.27
Zahid Mahmood	34	2	18	4.50	12	36.16
Naseem Shah	19	14	77	6.41	38	36.94
Hasan Ali	28	21	366	13.55	77	24.57
England (from)	**Age**	**Tests**	**Runs**	**Bat avge**	**Wkts**	**Bowl avge**
Ben Duckett	28	6	359	32.63	–	–
Zak Crawley	24	30	1,557	28.83	–	–
†Ollie Pope	24	32	1,675	32.21	40ct	1st
Joe Root	31	126	10,629	49.66	50	46.74
Harry Brook	23	3	369	73.80	–	–
*Ben Stokes	31	88	5,541	35.98	193	31.89
Will Jacks	24	2	89	22.25	6	38.66
†Ben Foakes	29	17	746	31.08	48ct	5st
Jack Leach	31	31	417	13.03	103	34.52
James Anderson	40	177	1,302	9.16	675	26.13
Ollie Robinson	28	13	190	10.00	59	19.61
Mark Wood	32	27	606	15.94	88	30.93
**Rehan Ahmed	18	3	195	32.50	8	30.11

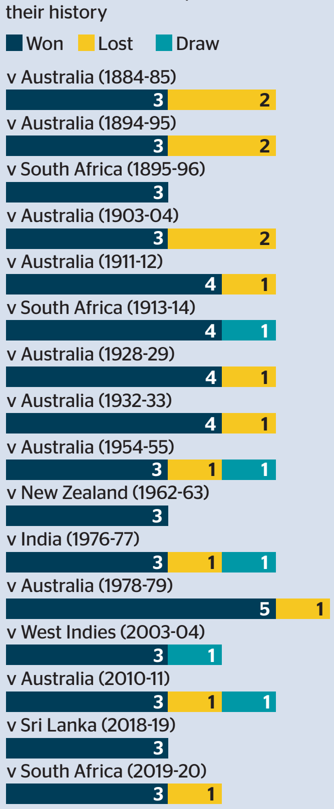
*Captain; **First-class record

Umpires Joel Wilson (West Indies) and Ahsan Raza (Pakistan).

Series details *England lead three-match series 2-0* **First Test** England won by 74 runs (Rawalpindi). **Second** England won by 26 runs (Multan).

Happy travellers

If England beat Pakistan to win the third Test, it would be the 17th occasion they have won three or more Tests in a series away from home and just the second instance in Asia. It would also be the fourth 3-0 away whitewash in their history



Source: ESPN Statsguru



Stokes: If pitch is right

Simon Wilde Karachi

The uncapped teenage leg spinner Rehan Ahmed is under consideration for selection for England's final Test against Pakistan in Karachi where, if picked, he would become the youngest man to play cricket for his country.

Ben Stokes, the Test captain, said that he and the head coach, Brendon McCullum, could call up Ahmed, who, at 18 years and 126 days when the Test starts tomorrow, would break the record held by Brian Close since he played against New Zealand at Old Trafford in 1949.

With an unassailable 2-0 series lead, England can experiment, though Stokes said Ahmed's inclusion would not be a case of "giving away caps".

Stokes has not yet looked at the wicket at the National Stadium because he, like most of those who played in the second Test in Multan, chose not to train on Thursday. Stokes played golf instead. Ahmed was among those who took part in an optional net session.

The likeliest route into the side for Ahmed would be in place of Will Jacks (with Ollie Pope still keeping wicket). Jacks took six for 161 in the first innings in Rawalpindi but in the second Test bowled only eight overs of off spin and scored four and 31 from No 7.

Ahmed's ability with the bat will be an important consideration by Stokes and McCullum. In his most recent match for Leicestershire in the County Championship he scored 122 off 113 balls against Derbyshire batting at No 5.

Ben Foakes, England's first-choice wicketkeeper at the start of the tour, was ruled out of the first Test through illness, giving Pope an opportunity with the gloves. Pope kept well and retained the gloves in Multan to give Stokes an extra bowling option.

At the time, Stokes said: "The communication to Ben was that it's just for this Test match." but the England captain appeared to subtly shift stance. "Did I say it's a one-off? It's great to have options. I'm not going to give anything away until I've looked at that pitch."

Asked if Ahmed would play, Stokes alluded positively to his batting and bowling. "We've been thinking about it

remarkable year

RIZWAN TABASSUM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Root, centre, and Ahmed, third from left, join the other England players in a game of football keepy-uppy in Karachi yesterday

we're not afraid to pick teen spinner

[picking him]. We can't go into too much detail until me and Baz [McCullum] have had a look at the wicket.

"When we spoke about having Rehan in the squad, it was more than just integrating him. We did speak about having no issues with selecting him if it was the right option. I don't think this is a case of — if he was to play — giving caps away. We picked him not just because of his talent, but because we thought it would be a good opportunity.

"He loves cricket. I'm struggling to work out whether he's a batter or a leg spinner, which shows how much talent he's got. We got snippets of what he can do with the bat in that warm-up game [in Abu Dhabi last month], when he got 26 off ten balls. Having a wrist spinner is always exciting, but it's [about] not getting too carried away. He is only young and you've still got to nurture talent."

Ahmed is a quiet man for whom this tour has been a big step up in cricketing education. He was not among the original tour party announced on October 12; his name was added only three weeks ago, a deliberate ploy by Rob Key, England's managing director of cricket, to avoid too bright a spotlight being thrown on him. Key thinks Ahmed is four or five years away from being the finished article, but that is not necessarily an argument against picking him.



Ahmed was called up to the squad only 23 days ago

Stokes's insistence that Test caps were not there to be given away reflects his determination to secure what would be England's first whitewash in Pakistan and only their fourth whitewash anywhere overseas in a series of three or more matches. "We won the series there [Sri Lanka, 2018-19] before the last game and there was even more put on to it knowing that we could be the only English team to [achieve a 3-0] whitewash in Sri Lanka," Stokes said. "So although we'll still lift the trophy [here], there's still an extra bit knowing that we could walk away from Pakistan with a whitewash."

With the racism issue in English cricket revisited this week at further Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport hearings, Stokes responded to an observation that England had drawn on only white Test cricketers in the past six months by saying that Ahmed could be a beacon of hope.

"In my time within the England team you have been selected on your skills first and foremost, regardless of your beliefs or what you look like," he said. "If you're good enough, you're going to get picked. Rehan could be an unbelievable example to set to younger kids. They've maybe heard about what's happened in cricket recently [but] he can be seen as an example of, 'No, we've got this 18-year-old, hopefully a potential superstar, why can't I be that?'"

Dein: US owners pose threat to English pyramid

Henry Winter



Chief Football Writer, Doha

David Dein, one of the driving forces behind the formation and growth of the Premier League, voiced his relief that the European Super League was all but seen off yesterday, but warned that the promotion and relegation structure of the English pyramid must be "protected" from American owners.

Dein, the former vice-chairman of Arsenal and the FA, is in Doha to watch the World Cup — he has attended 56 of the 62 games to date — and to make a presentation to the Fifa president, Gianni Infantino, about the need for football to adopt "pure time". This would take responsibility for timekeeping away from the referee and give it to another official, who will assess time-wasting, VAR delays, goal celebrations and substitutions to ensure the right amount is played.

"I'm on a campaign driving the game forward regarding 'pure time' timekeeping," Dein said.

As Dein spoke yesterday, news came through that the advocate general of the European Court of Justice, Athanasios Rantos, had delivered his opinion that Fifa and Uefa rules were "compatible with EU competition law" so they could block an ESL, as still proposed by Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus.



"I was very worried about the Super League," Dein said. "That was the owners not reading the tea leaves properly. They got the wrong message, and that clearly was driven by owners thinking that there was a holy grail out there [of a closed shop and increased revenue], and that probably promoted the sale of Liverpool and Manchester United."

Fenway Sports Group and the Glazer family were heavily involved in backing the ESL, which would have guaranteed their lucrative place among the elite. Promotion and relegation adds to the drama and jeopardy that makes English football so special.

"It works," Dein said. "They've got a different dynamic in the States. They have a sterile league and they can move franchises around from city to city. We're not like that. We are passionate about our clubs. It's club football that means so much and has to be protected." Dein contacted Stan Kroenke, Arsenal's present owner, to urge him to resist the ESL plot last year but the American did not reply.

Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus are all clinging to the sinking ship of the ESL, dreaming of maximising their revenues because their leagues lag behind the Premier League commercially. "The Super League was really [designed] to slow down the Premier League because everybody regards our train as going too quick," Dein said. "They don't like it."

As for the likely buyers of Liverpool and Manchester United, Dein said: "When I joined Arsenal, the people buying were local businessmen investing in their club and then it changed, they became millionaires [buying], then billionaires, and it will change again and become sovereign states."

Dein, a former member of the FA International Committee and an ally of the FA's chief executive, Mark Bullingham, felt that Gareth Southgate did a good job here in Qatar, where England bowed out in the quarter-finals to France. "I think Gareth should stay," Dein said. "The FA think the same, they want him to stay. He may decide he can't take the team any further and he may be right. I'd like him to stay in some capacity because I think he's a decent man."

As for a potential successor should Southgate decide to leave, Dein did not believe that the FA necessarily had to go home-grown. "I've never been opposed to a foreign coach," said the man who brought Sven-Goran Eriksson to England in 2001.

Dein is close to the boards of the FA and the Premier League, and believes that more care must be taken with the number of home-grown players in match-day squads. "I've never been one particularly for quotas but it does bother me that when the England manager goes to a game in the Premier League he may only see five or six players out of 22," Dein said.

"Maybe a couple more of the substitutes should be English, home-grown. But are they just going to be professional substitutes, just put in to make up the numbers? But then again they are with the first team, enjoying that environment. It's going to naturally evolve because every club now is putting so much resources into their own academies. Spurs' academy is one of the finest in England. It's sensitive. When I see the Premier League success … the truth is because the overseas players are coming in."

Dein believes that the quality of this World Cup will lead to the possibility of another winter tournament. "I know club managers won't like it because they will lose their players at a critical time but for the World Cup itself as a tournament the players are fresher," he said. "Are the players tired from playing 50, 60 games [in a full season], particularly the key players? There's every chance. This has been such a success. Ask the fans, ask the players. They have been based in one place all the time, no travelling, no flights. They've enjoyed it.

"This is in one city. Selfishly I'd say London can do it. It's been a very successful tournament. The refereeing overall's been very good, VAR largely been fine."

But will it change the Qataris, whose human-rights record has been widely criticised?

"I'm hoping it will," Dein said. "They've been very open-minded to it [change]. I think Qatar will benefit from this going forward. I hope so. That should be a legacy for them."

Dein is on a campaign to take timekeeping out of the referee's hands

Memo to Messi: This is what it takes to triumph at a World Cup

Seven champions from seven sports provide a blueprint for winning, which, **Owen Slot** discovers, comes down to the meaning of being a 'team'

How to become a World Cup winner. That is an essay title, or more likely a book, or, for many people it's a whole lifetime's work, certainly for Lionel Messi it feels that way. Yet, for the purposes of this newspaper, we have managed to reduce it to one single goal. Five players, six passes, the ball sweeping intricately and rapidly from defence to attack. Messi is nothing to do with it, it's the Netherlands who go 3-0 up and there's no catching them. We are, of course, talking about the women's hockey World Cup final.

In that final, in Spain in July, the Netherlands beat Argentina 3-1. Eva de Goede, who had a crucial role in the move, had seen it and done it all before as a double world champion and a triple Olympic gold medallist, yet she described it as "one of the most amazing team-play goals I've ever been a part of in the whole of my career" and she is not just talking about the accuracy, the movement, the vision, the finish or the sheer, stunning beauty of it.

"If you watched that team," she says, "you would never know what was going on." Indeed you wouldn't. They looked so brilliantly connected. Yet the reason it was an "amazing" piece of team play was largely because that Dutch team had been so indignantly unconnected, so bitterly divided. Yet they understood exactly what it takes to become world champions.

There are seven present world champions from seven sports involved in this story. And "present" is important, here, as we shall see.

What was striking when asking such a diverse group of winners their story — how did you do it? — was that not one of them talked initially about the intricacies of what happened on the field of play, the team formations, tactics, technique or their superstar players. They all go straight for the meaning of being a "team".

They talk about tightness and trust, and before you think that this article is just a repeat of old clichés about the strength of the sisterhood or being a band of brothers, what was also striking was the uniform insistence that being a team doesn't mean you have to be friends. The great Australia cricket teams of the past three decades were not mates. De Goede's Dutch hockey team were quite the opposite; they were nearly torn in two. The South Africa rugby team are born from such racial and cultural diversity that many of them speak different languages. In Qatar, the Morocco team were the same, yet they were perhaps the strongest unit in the whole World Cup.

"You completely don't have to be friends, far from it," Eoin Morgan, the captain of England's one-day cricket world champions, says. "The day I play in a team when everyone gets along, I think there's an issue. If everything was friendly and great, it would be too easy and it wouldn't work."

When you ask Morgan the "Jenga" question — what single element would have made your team collapse if you had withdrawn it? — he doesn't say Ben Stokes or Jofra Archer. He says, immediately: "The level of trust."

Francois Louw, the Springbok World Cup winner, gives a similar answer. "Our alignment," is how he puts it.

Jenny Levy, the coach of the United States women's lacrosse world champions, touches on a similar theme. "We were all about the group as a whole rather than one person," she says. And, no, that's not exactly advanced teamship. But then she explains how that works: "By not having a single captain but having a number of captains or leaders."

This was a kind of a breaking of the mould; it established officially that no single player was a bigger star than any other. She decided on five captains; they rotated the traditional captaincy responsibilities, and as a result leadership and ownership became widely engrained. "There was probably one person or two who thought they should have been the solo captain," she says, "and that's probably why they weren't."

> The day I play in a team when everyone gets along, I think there's an issue

Think of this US lacrosse team and then Argentina and Messi. They could hardly be more different.

Jukka Jalonen, the Finland national ice hockey coach, achieved a similar balance of responsibility and trust to the US lacrosse team, but in a different way. Under his coaching reign Finland have won three world championships. Canada and Russia are generally recognised as producing more individual superstar players, yet Jalonen's "Finnish Lions" are the Olympic and world champions. The way he manages his squad creates both teamship and a distinctive national style of play.

"Maybe we are not as skilful as other teams," he says, "but there are lots of things other than skill: how we co-operate, how hard we play, how we do it together. We don't give the opponent time on the puck, we put pressure on straight away. So people hate to play against us."



The f-word featured strongly in the call to arms Erasmus used to inspire South Africa

How so? When an ice hockey squad of 20 is rotated during a game, it is traditional for the better players to have more time on the ice, which creates a pecking order. Jalonen, however, has a flat power structure, rotating his squad in four units of five on a largely equal basis. "Everybody is playing," he says. "Everybody is involved, everyone is respected, everyone is equally valued. That is very good for team spirit. It's a mental thing but also a physical thing."

It's a physical thing because it means the team are less fatigued at the end of games, which makes an impact particularly in tournament hockey when the team have games on consecutive nights. Finland, thus, hardly ever lose the third and final period. "When we are physical at the end of the game," Jalonen says, "it is a little competitive edge for us."

What has all this got to do with Sunday's World Cup final between France and Argentina? Clearly it is all about team culture. Club football sometimes struggles in this area, particularly at the very top level, where players of so many nationalities and languages are blended into one group. In international football, however, its impact can be huge. It is one key area where Gareth Southgate has been conspicuously successful with the England team. In Qatar, where there was so little time to work on tactics and game patterns, the strength of "trust" was even more influential than normal. Look what happened to Belgium, who failed to qualify for the knockout stage.

There are untold ways and means to avoid doing a Belgium. Go to a different extreme like the Switzerland tug-of-war team. This is an amateur sport, which means that trust — that your team-mates are (literally) pulling their weight in training — is huge. To build that, they therefore go ski touring together in the off season. "You have to be like one big family," says Ueli Christen, who is a player-coach in the under-640kg (light-middleweight) category.

And how does that play out in a world championship? Christen recalls the final, in Birmingham, US, in July, against England. They had noticed that two of the England team, pulling at No 6 and No 7, would tire after four or five minutes. "So we said we have to wait a bit and not go on full attack," he says. That required belief, trust and patience, "because then it will be much easier to make an attack. This is how it played out."

This is how it was for De Goede and the Dutch team on the eve of the 2014 hockey World Cup, which was held in the Netherlands: they spent a night camping out inside the main stadium where the games were to be played. "That was something special to us," she says. "It really gave us a feeling that this is our home, we've shared special moments together here and no one is going to beat us here."

When speaking to these world champions, though, you realise that winning isn't enough. Or rather, it helps if collectively you are driven by more than owning a shiny medal or having the title of "world champion" by your name.

"I genuinely don't think the guys were completely after silverware," Morgan says. "It was more what we could do together *without* the end goal being winning."

Morgan puts this into context in the heat of the Lord's final against New Zealand in 2019, just before Archer was about to bowl England's Super Over. "Jos [Buttler] came over," he says, "jovial as anything, 'Hope your pockets are full of shamrocks.' Adil [Rashid] was standing next



Eva de Goede
Member of the Netherlands team that won the women's hockey World Cup this year

Eoin Morgan
Captain when England won cricket's 50-over World Cup, beating New Zealand at Lord's in 2019



Nikolaj Jacobsen
Has won two handball World Championships as Denmark coach, the first on home turf in 2019

Francois Louw
Flanker in the South Africa team that beat England to win the rugby union World Cup in 2019

to us, so I said, 'No, Allah's with us.' And Adil said, 'Allah's always with us.' We all had a laugh and a joke, a bit of fun and this was in the biggest moment of our playing careers. That's almost a better feeling than lifting a trophy."

Nikolaj Jacobsen has won two handball world championships as Denmark coach and the first, in 2019, on home turf, had a very specific purpose: "To create a very big, happy party for everyone at home."

For De Goede and the Dutch hockey team, it is always about inspiring young girls to pursue their sport. This is not uncommon. For the lacrosse World Championship in Maryland, US, in July, the American team, Levy says, saw themselves as "pioneers for the game". This made theirs an altruistic, rather than selfish, quest. "They were playing for something bigger than themselves," she says, which then also translated into the way they played. "One of our rallying cries was to play this very exciting, electric style of game that kids would want to come out and see."

This sense of greater purpose cannot be much greater than that given to the Springboks at the World Cup in 2019. It is all there, in the documentary *Chasing the Sun*, with every f-word employed by Rassie Erasmus, the head coach, milked to its full effect. This is his call to arms to the team before the quarter-final against Japan: "These guys [Japan] do it [want to win] because they want to grow rugby. F***ing we want to do it because we want to save our f***ing country. We want to do it because we have f***ing 27 per cent unemployment. We've got 14 f***ing murders a day. They [Japan] have 120 million people and are one of the richest countries in the world. It's pissing me off that they think that gives them the right."

This explains what Louw meant by alignment: aligned to a collective purpose. "We have our huge diversity of cultures and individuals yet we're in the room together as brothers," Louw says. "We were a team of individuals who were a collective.

"So when we got to the final against England, it was so much about us. There is a camera shot, from when we are walking up the tunnel before coming out, with [the captains] Siya Kolisi and Owen Farrell at the front, waiting. The camera is facing straight down to them and what you see is every single South African player looking directly ahead of them; not once did they look at the opposition. Look at the other side, there's a nice freeze-frame and Owen Farrell is looking over, so is George Ford. There are three or four England players looking over and sizing up the opposition. But for us, it was about us; it wasn't about England. That is how we framed it."

You wonder, for France and Argentina on Sunday: how exactly are they framing it? Are France really even framing it all? Argentina certainly are; even without saying so, they have Messi at the centre of the frame; the fulfilment of Messi is like a noble national cause.



The fulfilment of Messi's lifelong dream has become a noble national cause in Argentina

Also finally, and crucially perhaps: how do they communicate? Because, on the playing fields of the modern day, this is also what makes world champions.

Jacobsen's Denmark handball team learnt the hard way, by coming fourth in his first tournament in charge, in 2018. "We had some serious talks after it," he says. "We had to be able to demand more of each other. But if we can't demand something without someone getting angry, then we are not a good team."

Likewise Morgan's England. He recalls the early days of his career and "the tough generation of going out there and gutsing something out. When I came into the team, it was actually very difficult to understand where people were at because no one talked about it."

By 2016, he still hadn't become the complete master of communication, as he says himself of the famous denouement to the T20 World Cup final against West Indies when Stokes gave up four consecutive sixes to Carlos Brathwaite. "I gave Ben the final over. I've watched that tape back a thousand times. I've always thought, 'What if I took more time with him to make sure he was in a good space, to make sure he had parked the previous ball mentally and is refocusing on what he is doing?'

"What I do now is to hold on to the ball for as long as I can — and then chuck the guy the ball. Even if I have to walk over to slow things down, I do that."

Thus, in the 2019 50-over final, before Archer bowled his Super Over, Morgan changed his own fielding position so he could be closer to Archer. "After he had bowled that first ball [a wide], I walked over, slowed things down. He was losing his head a bit. I was listening. Get him back into the present and have him trusting in what I was saying — that was a big thing."

> "But for us, it was about South Africa; it wasn't about England. That is how we framed it

There won't be a single player in the World Cup final who doesn't possess toughness and resilience — but those concepts are being redefined in modern sport. And this is what the story of the Dutch women's hockey team is all about. They may have won the Olympic gold last year but they sacked their coach afterwards and instigated an inquest into the team culture.

De Goede has straddled two eras and had to learn fast. "I look at my younger years," she says, "when coaches would shout at me. I didn't enjoy it that much. I would shrug it off, go home and cry to my parents. But that would be it; I'd suck it up and start again tomorrow. It would never come into my mind that I could say anything about it."

Yet for the new generation, this has changed, and it is this that created the split in the team. "We lost the human side with each other," De Goede says. "It's a fine line between what is OK and what is not and I hadn't realised that much before. If you want to be the best, you are in an environment where you ask a lot of yourself and others. You are talking about winning a gold medal, you have to be demanding. But some girls were scared to speak up and say that it was too much for them.

"There is a switch in the generation. There are more topics nowadays that are more openly talked about: being able to share, be vulnerable. In the past you would not mention it and just crack on."

That is why that Dutch third goal represents so much. It was a team with a purpose, a team with a mission, a team who were definitely not friends; nevertheless, a team who were learning to be modern and to debunk old dogma, a team who had moved far enough that, by that final against Argentina, they delivered their best performance.

Maybe some of that makes for a blueprint for the next football world champions.

Ruling likely to end hopes of Super League plan

The clubs pushing for a European Super League have suffered a serious blow to their ambitions after an initial court ruling (Martin Ziegler writes).

The European Court of Justice's (ECJ) advocate general has delivered a legal opinion that Uefa and Fifa have the right, under EU competition law, to expel breakaway clubs from their national leagues and ban them from international competitions.

It would mean Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus, the three clubs challenging Uefa's position, having to leave their domestic leagues and European competitions to form a European Super League.

The finding is also likely to incentivise the owners of Manchester United and Liverpool to sell, with the likelihood of the proposal returning now looking increasingly remote.

The advocate general's decision is usually followed by the ECJ's judges, whose final ruling is expected in March. An ECJ statement read: "While ESLC [European Super League Company] is free to set up its own independent football competition outside the Uefa and Fifa ecosystem, it cannot however, in parallel with the creation of such a competition, continue to participate in the football competitions organised by Fifa and Uefa without the prior authorisation of those federations."

David Dein interview, page 69

Serious injury to Miedema sours big night for Arsenal

Arsenal's progression to the knockout stage of the Champions League despite a 1-0 defeat by Lyon, was overshadowed by a serious knee injury to Vivianne Miedema.

The Arsenal forward went down in first-half stoppage time. There was no contact with any other player, and her team-mates and opposition immediately surrounded Miedema, recognising the severity of the injury.

She was stretchered off in tears and wheeled down the tunnel, with her team-mate and girlfriend Beth Mead — who was on crutches after rupturing her anterior cruciate ligament — following.

McBurnie is cleared of stamping on pitch invader

The Sheffield United striker Oli McBurnie has been cleared of stamping on a pitch-invading fan after claiming he hopped over him to protect his injured foot following May's Sky Bet Championship play-off semi-final defeat by Nottingham Forest at the City Ground.

McBurnie was acquitted of assaulting George Brinkley, a Forest supporter, after the player's barrister said he had been "like a ballerina" in avoiding contact.

Finding McBurnie not guilty of a charge of assault by beating, district judge Leo Pyle said evidence given by Brinkley had been "somewhat flimsy".

Santos quits as Portugal coach after shock defeat

Fernando Santos quit as coach of Portugal yesterday after the team's shock World Cup quarter-final loss to Morocco, the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) announced.

An agreement was reached "to end the journey of great success that began in September 2014", said the FPF, which added that it "will now launch the process to choose the next national coach".

Santos said: "I'm leaving with the feeling of enormous gratitude. When you lead a group, you have to make some difficult decisions. It's normal that not everyone is happy with the choices I made."

France is now game's ultimate



David Walsh

Doha

It has been enlightening to watch the progress of Aurélien Tchouaméni through the World Cup. Tchouaméni, 22, has started all six France games, played every minute of four and was substituted in games already won (Australia and Poland). The defensive midfielder also scored an important goal against England and has played with an authority at odds with his age.

What is it about France and its penchant for unearthing technically accomplished and athletically gifted young footballers? Clairefontaine, the 140-acre national football academy set in the Rambouillet forest 40 miles southwest of Paris, is offered as a one-word explanation. It was opened in 1988 and a decade later France won their first World Cup. Four years ago they got their second.

Thirty-five minutes into the semi-final against Morocco, Tchouaméni drove forward from midfield, his long stride eating up the ground. Timing his pass with precision, he slid the ball inside the Morocco centre back Achraf Dari for Kylian Mbappé. Pressed by the defender, Mbappé's attempted finish was hooked clear by Jawad El Yamiq.

The ball looped out of the danger area towards Tchouaméni, whose first touch was a softly weighted volleyed pass to Olivier Giroud, giving the centre forward a straightforward opportunity. Giroud bent his left-footed shot wide of the unguarded goal. Tchouaméni's passes were worthy of two goals, not one.

Later in the game he started the move that led to the team's clinching second goal.

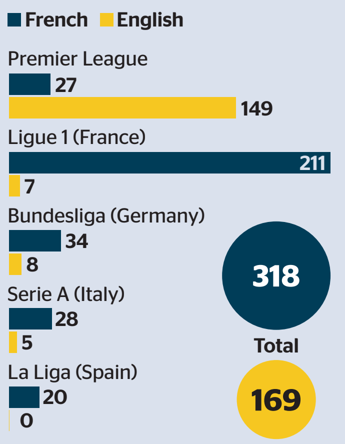
Before the World Cup, he had played 12 games for France. At this tournament, he has been pivotal to the way the team have played. The key to that pass to Giroud was the midfielder knowing what to do before the ball reached him. According to Robert Moreno, his coach at Monaco from 2020 until his departure to Real Madrid in the summer, Tchouaméni once lacked this peripheral vision.

In training at Monaco, Cesc Fàbregas dispossessed him, creeping up on his blind side and nicking the ball. "Aurélien did not have the capacity to position his body so he did not lose the ball," Moreno said. "His peripheral vision was not good. We started working on that. You need to look around before receiving, not when you receive the ball. There are examples like Xavi and [Sergio] Busquets. If you count how many times they looked around during a match, it was incredible, 300 to 400. People say Xavi and Busquets always made the right decision. It is because they knew what was around them."

It is thought that coaches love coaching but this isn't strictly true. They enjoy working with players who are coachable; the others can be hard work. Tchouaméni is a coach's dream.

French talent factory

Almost twice as many Frenchmen as Englishmen have played in Europe's biggest five leagues this season. Spain, with 329, has provided most players



He understands the game and is a quick learner. After Wednesday's semi-final he spoke to journalists in English, a language he had studied while at Bordeaux and then Monaco because he'd wanted to play in the Premier League.

The only thing that could have taken him away from that career path was Real Madrid. They came in with an offer of €80 million (£69.7 million). As soon as he got to the Bernabéu, he was in the starting XI. He is also the reason the club were prepared to let Casemiro join Manchester United.

It is convenient, of course, to explain France's latter-day eminence strictly in terms of the system, to see Clairefontaine not as a factory but as the most advanced football laboratory. There, they tweak the models, like engineers at the Mercedes headquarters in Stuttgart. Each model better than the one that preceded it.

In 2018, France won the World Cup, with Paul Pogba making an important contribution to the team effort. Since then, Pogba's career has stagnated. Lots of injury and some attitudinal problems. Back at the laboratory they came up with an improved version of the same player; one with Pogba's physical prowess, athleticism and technical ability but also a better mentality. This new player is Aurélien Tchouaméni.

As alluring as the narrative is, it is also nonsense. What France is producing cannot be explained by the impressive 17th-century chateau with its pristine training pitches set in the Rambouillet forest. How could it? It wasn't one of the sports scientists at Clairefontaine who advised the 19-year-old Tchouaméni to hire his own personal trainer when he had just broken into the first team at Bordeaux. That was the kid's own decision. Monaco discovered this and it played into their decision to pay what Bordeaux were asking. Mbappé did spend time at Clairefontaine but could the various coaches there have had anything like the influence that his dad, Wilfried, had?

Wilfried was born in Cameroon and emigrated to France. He was his son's first coach and has been his coach ever since and is now his agent too. Other parents took their kids to the cinema or on sunshine holidays, Wilfried and Fayza Lamari took their five-year-old to meet Thierry Henry and Zinédine Zidane.

What to say about Antoine Griezmann? He never got near Clairefontaine or any academy in France. "I was 14 when I arrived at Real Sociedad [in San Sebastian, northern Spain]. No team wanted me in France, I trialled for around eight clubs and then Real came," he has said. From the age of 14, he has never lived in France.

This is about something greater than the national academy. It relates to France as a country that offers young people excellent sports facilities and good coaching from a young age. Brazil, with a much bigger population, 214 million to France's 67.5 million, is the only country in the world that produces more professional footballers.

For Wednesday's semi-final, France had to play without their first-choice centre back, Dayot Upamecano, and the midfielder Adrien Rabiot. They turned to two 23-year-olds, Ibrahima Konaté and Youssouf Fofana. Konaté and Fofana performed well, reflecting the depth of talent in the squad. This is not surprising. At the last count, 34 French players were registered in the Premier League, 20 in La Liga, 37 in Serie A and 40 in the Bundesliga. Of the 40 in the German league, five are



Are Deschamps' men just a team of counterattackers?

Tactical analysis

France have reached the final despite long spells defending deep, writes **James Gheerbrant**

Didier Deschamps' France team have, at a minimum, now reached three major tournament finals in six years. They could yet become the first team to retain the World Cup since Brazil in 1962. It seems clear that they are likely to go down as one of the all-time great tournament teams. So it's worth posing the question: how will they be remembered?

Wednesday night's semi-final against Morocco was, to their detractors, a classic Deschamps performance — and that would be said more with grudging respect than outright admiration. It was one of those games where France seemed to do just enough and no more. They scored early, managed the game, allowed Morocco to make a lot of the running and looked to use the pace of their forwards to attack the space behind Morocco's defensive line.

Are France, then, just a good counterattacking team who keep getting away with the simplest plan in the book? Well, yes and no. They certainly do like to play on the counter, and sit unusually deep for a top team in an effort to create the conditions for those fast breaks. At this World Cup, Germany, Spain, England and Brazil have been the four teams to start their attacks furthest from their own goals, with Hansi Flick's team having an average starting distance of 49.7 metres upfield.

Argentina, France's opponents in the final, rank 11th with 42.5 metres. France's average starting distance of 40.6 metres from their own goal ranks them 19th of the 32 teams in the tournament.

But I'm not convinced that their style is egregiously direct. One way to get a read on a team's overall style is to look at their number of build-up attacks (defined by Opta as an open-play sequence that contains ten or more passes and either ends in a shot or has at least one touch in the box) and their number of direct attacks (defined as an open-play sequence that starts just inside the team's half and has at least 50 per cent of movement towards the opposition's goal, ending with a shot or touch in the opposition box) and the ratio between the two.

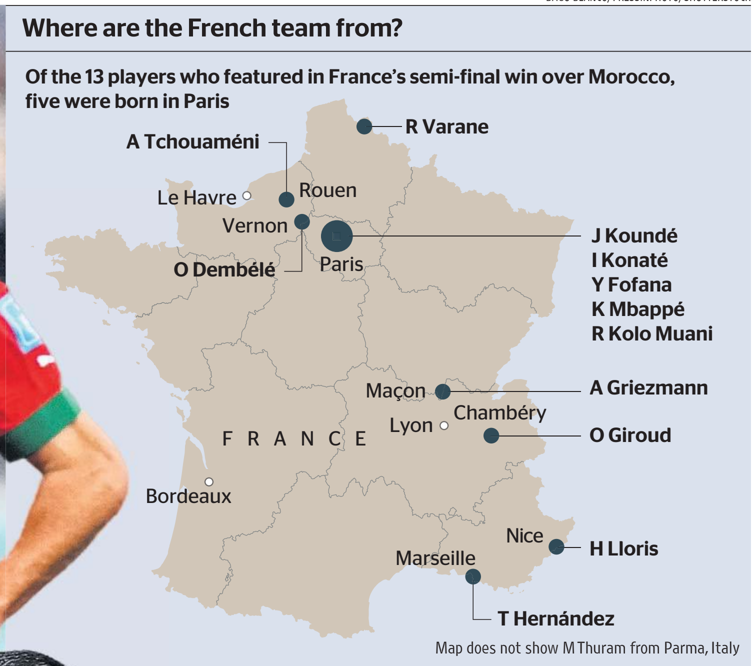
In this tournament, France have recorded 1.8 build-up attacks for every direct attack: pretty middle-of-the-pack but not much different from some of the more admired teams at this tournament, such as Japan (2) and Brazil (1.89). Argentina are on 2.5. In fact, what stands out when you look at it like this is that the most successful teams are those that vary their style of attack, with a slight lean towards build-up play, rather than those that cleave too much to one end of the spectrum (Spain and Denmark) or the other (Mexico and Uruguay). France sit comfortably within that happy medium.

What is certainly true of Deschamps' team is that they play according to the situation. Unlike Luis Enrique's Spain, and even Gareth Southgate's England to a certain extent, they are not unconditionally committed to a certain way of

producer of talent



BAGU BLANCO/PRESSINPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK



at Bayern Munich. No other European country has anything like this dispersal of talent. Eduardo Camavinga, the exciting Real Madrid midfielder, 20, is in the France squad but not the starting team.

The French story is also better understood by considering the ethnicity of their squad. After the Second World War, France imported many workers from its colonies. They came for labour and made France their home. According to a 2014 census, the number of immigrants is six million, 9 per cent of the population. When France won in Russia four years ago, 87 per cent of their squad were from families of immigrants. Of the 26-man squad in Qatar, 92 per cent come from immigrants. William Saliba's mum, like Mbappé's dad, is Cameroonian. Camavinga was born to Congolese parents in a refugee camp in Angola.

Other countries listed in the players' biographies are Algeria, Benin, Germany, Guadeloupe, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Martinique, Morocco, Senegal and Spain. Hugo Lloris provides the Spanish connection as his dad, a Spanish banker, moved to Monaco.

We have watched with admiration as this ethnically diverse and wonderfully talented group progress through the competition. Tchouaméni is a good example of the squad's quality. At only 22, the responsibilities of playing in the pivotal defensive midfield role have rested easily on his shoulders.

Against Morocco he closed off the channels that the opposition sought to play through. He funnelled left, then right, forever moving, always affecting the play. When little skirmishes happened after an overly aggressive challenge, he was the peacemaker. Like an old hand. If a team-mate chased back, he encouraged by clapping his hands.

Someone asked Didier Deschamps afterwards about his two young and relatively inexperienced midfielders, Fofana and Tchouaméni. "Well experience isn't everything," the head coach said. "They have good qualities and play in top clubs. They are good enough to play at this level. Fofana didn't show enough strength against Tunisia but he showed tonight he learnt from that experience.

"Tchouaméni is different. He played for us when he was very young, went to Real Madrid and slotted straight in. He has all the strengths that you need at this level and there are only slight adjustments that he needs."

At the end of the game Tchouaméni, the son of a Cameroonian pharmacist, stood alone as his team-mates rushed to celebrate. He sympathised with a nearby Moroccan player and was then embraced by Deschamps, who wrapped his arms around him for what seemed like an age. It gave you some idea of how Tchouaméni has performed in this tournament.

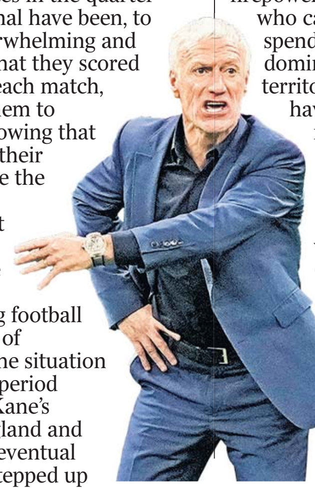
playing; they are pragmatic, and change their plan as befits what analysts call the game state (basically, the scoreline). Part of the reason that their performances in the quarter-final and semi-final have been, to some eyes, underwhelming and unambitious, is that they scored an early goal in each match, which allowed them to throttle back, knowing that the onus was on their opponents to take the initiative, while retaining a threat on the break.

France reserve their best, most focused attacking football for short periods of intensity, when the situation demands. In the period between Harry Kane's equaliser for England and Olivier Giroud's eventual winner, France stepped up their intent, committed more players further forward and created several clear chances.

France are a team with easy firepower. They are one of those sides who can score lots of goals without spending large parts of the match dominating possession or territory. Their first-choice team have generated 13 goals in five matches in this tournament; in the knockout stage of the previous World Cup, they scored 11 in four. They have created non-penalty chances worth 11.6 expected goals (xG), somewhat better than Argentina's 8.9.

Because they often sit in a compact defensive block, getting men between the ball and the goal, and attack quickly into wide, open space, France kill you by taking better shots than you do. At this World Cup, the average xG value of their shots (0.13, meaning a 13 per cent chance) is the fifth-highest, and the average xG value of the shots they concede (0.08, an 8 per cent chance) is the fifth-lowest. France are the only team in the top five at both ends of the pitch.

All that said, their plan is not infallible. It's hard to quantify — and they may very well have found a way to extricate themselves from it — but you sense that France could have been in more trouble in this tournament than they have been. If Poland had made the most of their period of superiority, or England had converted one more of their chances, or Morocco had scored early in the second half, they would have had to cope with more jeopardy. It's one thing to invite those teams to attack you; it's another to play possum against a team with Lionel Messi.



Deschamps' team tend to mix up their attacking styles

Real Madrid win race for Brazilian sensation

CONTINUED FROM BACK

extended to deploying Thiago Silva, the highly respected 38-year-old Brazilian centre back, to try to convince Endrick that Stamford Bridge was his ideal destination. Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain were also among the front-runners to sign the teenager.

But Real Madrid have made a strategic effort to snap up the most exciting Brazilian talents in recent years, ever since the club lost out on Neymar to Barcelona in 2013, in a hugely controversial deal that infuriated the Madrid president, Florentino Perez. To avoid missing out again, Perez flooded Brazil with talent-spotters, in a concerted effort led by Real Madrid's chief scout Juni Calafat.

It means Endrick follows the likes of Vinícius Jr, Rodrygo and Reinier Jesus in leaving Brazil for the Bernabéu in recent years. In a similarly structured deal to Endrick's, Vinícius signed for Real Madrid in 2017, aged 17, and joined a year later from Flamengo for about €45 million (about £40 million). After a patchy start in Spain, Vinicius, now 22, has become one of the world's most lethal wide forwards.

The 21-year-old Rodrygo arrived from Santos for a similar fee and has just played in all five of Brazil's games at the World Cup. Reinier, who is a year younger than Rodrygo, is yet to break through and is on loan at the La Liga side Girona. Reinier joined Real Madrid from Flamengo for €35 million in 2020.

Endrick became the youngest player to play for Palmeiras when he represented the first team, aged 16, in October and he helped them to win the Brazilian title by scoring three goals in seven appearances. The left-footed striker had previously scored 165 goals in 169 games for Palmeiras' youth teams.

"I want to thank Palmeiras, for ever the club of my heart, for giving me everything necessary to become what I am today, for helping me achieve my dreams and for respecting my wishes and the wishes of my family," Endrick said.



Chelsea, Barcelona and PSG all wanted to sign Endrick

Chelsea have already turned their attention to other attacking targets, including David Datro Fofana, who plays for the Norwegian side Molde, and Youssoufa Moukoko of Borussia Dortmund. Dortmund remain hopeful they can tie Moukoko down to a new deal before the 18-year-old's contract expires next summer, with Manchester United and Liverpool also keen. Fofana has previously attracted interest from Brighton & Hove Albion.

Morocco dispute VAR calls

Morocco's football federation has complained to Fifa about the referee's performance in their World Cup semi-final defeat by France.

The FMRF is unhappy that Cesar Ramos failed to award a penalty when Theo Hernandez made contact with Morocco's Sofiane Boufal in the area. To compound matters, the Mexican referee booked Boufal for a foul.

The Moroccans were also unhappy that Selim Amallah being hauled down as he awaited the delivery of a set piece was ignored by VAR.

Morocco lost 2-0 after an early goal by Hernandez was followed by a late strike from the substitute Randal Kolo Muani.

"The FMRF has written to the relevant body to review the refereeing decisions that deprived the Moroccan team of two penalties that were indisputable in the view of several refereeing specialists," the Moroccan ruling body said in a statement. "The FMRF was equally astonished that the video assistant referee did not react to these situations."

France's preparations for facing Argentina in the final on Sunday have been disrupted by a virus, with Kingsley Coman the third member of the squad to get it. Adrien Rabiot and Dayot Upamecano were forced to miss Wednesday night's game against Morocco, having been regular members of the French team.

Claims that the illness was "camel flu", which can kill up to a third of people who catch it, have been dismissed.

Yesterday Didier Deschamps confirmed that Coman had gone down with the virus. The France manager said the infected players were isolating. "We are trying to be careful so that it does not spread. The players have put in a great effort on the pitch and their immune systems suffer," he said.

Southgate's 'unfinished business'

CONTINUED FROM BACK

spoke of the "enormous energy" that such tournaments take.

He said then: "Whenever I finish these tournaments, you need time to make the correct decision. Emotionally, you're going through many feelings. The energy that it takes in these tournaments is enormous. I want to take the right decision, whatever that is, for the team."

The FA's hope is that Southgate feels he has unfinished business with England and that the development of the squad, with young players such as Jude Bellingham, Phil Foden and Bukayo Saka making such an impact, means that he will give it one more shot.



Former England players including Alan Shearer, Rio Ferdinand and Gary Neville have backed Southgate to stay, despite the World Cup being a missed opportunity. Shearer said England were "a shambles" before Southgate took over in 2016, while Neville said he "should absolutely carry on but I'm not as convinced as I was that he will".

There have, however, been some voices within football saying that the FA should look to an alternative to Southgate.

Joey Barton, the manager of Bristol Rovers who are in 12th position in League One, said after the defeat: "Stop rewarding failure. Time to hire somebody who can win."

Sport

Can we toast Qatar?

Lack of alcohol made World Cup safer – but also a bit dull

Matt Dickinson, page 64



'I didn't feel wanted'

Saracens were not inclusive, says Kpoku as he returns to face them

Page 66



FRENCH FOOTBALL FEDERATION



That World Cup final feeling

France players, led by Olivier Giroud, centre, celebrate in the dressing room after their semi-final win on Wednesday. World Cup final build-up, pages 70-73

FA hopes stars sway Southgate

England manager is 50-50 over future and leading officials believe players could be crucial

Martyn Ziegler, Matt Lawton

Football Association chiefs are hoping that England players' public and private displays of support for Gareth Southgate will persuade him to stay as manager for the next European Championship.

Southgate, 52, has said he wants to take some time before making his decision — his contract is due to run until December 2024. He has the full backing of the FA leadership but sources say they believe that it is finely balanced as to whether Southgate decides to continue or not.

One critical factor is understood to be the complete support of those in the England squad for Southgate to remain in charge. Some players went public with that backing after the 2-1 defeat by France in Saturday's World Cup quarter-final, while others have told Southgate privately that they want him to be in charge for the Euros campaign.

"Normally a manager goes when they have lost the dressing room — this is the totally opposite scenario," one source said. "The players are 100 per cent behind him staying and he has been made aware of that."

The FA will want Southgate to make a decision in early January so that the situation can be resolved by the middle of next month, as the Euros are only 18 months away, with the qualifiers beginning in March.

Mark Bullingham, the FA chief executive, will remain in regular contact with Southgate but the FA is aware that it needs to give him the time and space to "decompress". Although the FA has broad succession strategies in place for all its senior roles, including the England men's and women's managers' positions, no approaches will be made to any possible replacement for Southgate.

Should he decide to go, the FA would prefer his successor to be English, but if no one suitable was available it would look at foreign alternatives.

England's World Cup campaign has generally been viewed as very positive but after the France match Southgate

Continued on page 73

£60m prodigy snubs Chelsea

Tom Allnutt

Real Madrid have beaten a host of European clubs, including Chelsea, to the signature of the 16-year-old Brazilian Endrick and will pay about £62 million to land the Palmeiras striker.

Endrick will join Real Madrid in July 2024 when he turns 18, with the Palmeiras president, Leila Pereira, claiming that the deal is "the biggest in the history of Brazilian football". Madrid will pay Palmeiras an initial fee of £30 million, with the rest due in performance-related add-ons.

Endrick is one of the most talked-about young talents in the game and had been coveted by several leading European clubs, including Chelsea, who tried to lure the teenager by hosting his family during a visit to the club's Cobham training ground this season.

Chelsea's charm offensive even

Continued on page 73

Stokes weighs Ahmed debut

Simon Wilde Karachi

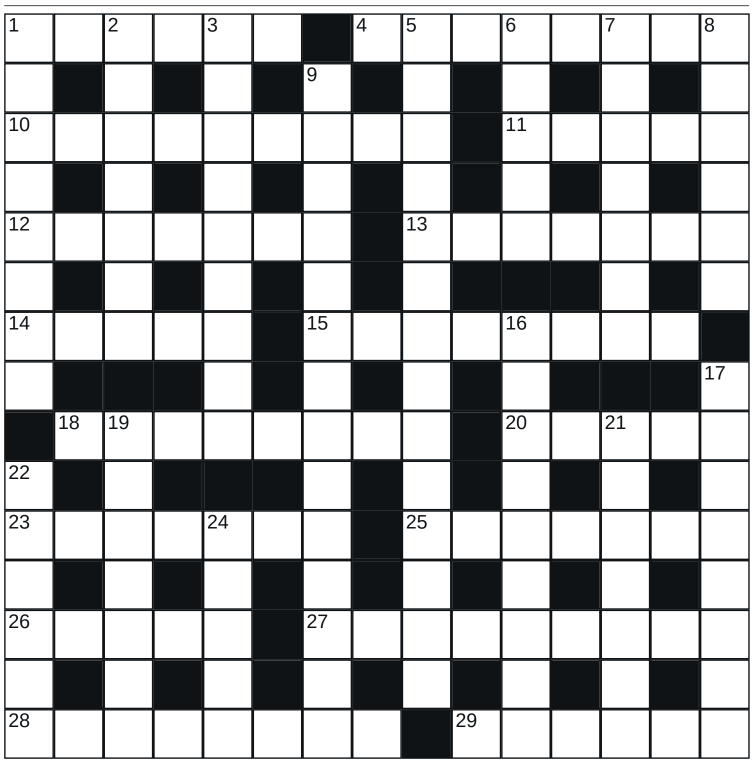
Ben Stokes was considering last night whether to make Rehan Ahmed England's youngest men's Test player by handing the teenager a debut in the third Test against Pakistan tomorrow.

Ahmed — at 18 years and 126 days when the Test starts— would break the record set by Brian Close against New Zealand at Old Trafford in 1949. If Ahmed, a leg-spinner, plays he is likely to replace Will Jacks, who bowled eight overs of off-spin in the second Test.

"When we [Stokes and the head coach Brendon McCullum] spoke about having Rehan in the squad, it was more than just integrating him," Stokes, the England captain, said. "We did speak about having no issues with selecting him … I don't think it is a case of — if he was to play — giving caps away."

Mike Atherton's Test preview, page 68

Times Crossword 28,475



ACROSS

1 Maybe money that's left on account, last of salary (6)
4 Person acquiring a record: disc with loud guitar (8)
10 Obsession of Arab, blocking title given to Lisa (9)
11 Assume German cheers after eliminating resistance (5)
12 Kind of pop record's sleeve showing lack of harmony (7)
13 Minor eminence not well dressed in white (7)
14 Banter with pair of females after a drink (5)
15 E.g. fighter's great skill, boxing right (8)
18 Will one carp see inside boat? I'm not sure (8)
20 Lodge in valley accommodating wife (5)
23 East Germans taking very little time in assimilation (7)
25 Once again, go over most of renegotiated treaties (7)
26 Ruffian, working for university, is one showing a lot of cheek? (5)
27 Staggered towards the sunset in a crowd (9)
28 Supply deal secured by helper making capital (8)
29 Cook fish slices in great quantities (6)*

DOWN

1 Lady Fortune, according to Spooner, is a weakling (4,4)
2 Vocalist crooned with head down amid grand cheers (7)
3 Succeed using computers? Pull the other one! (4,3,2)
5 During sunny day, scoff that lady's underwear is silly (14)
6 Dismiss half of costs on line (5)
7 Write quickly — from France's capital (4,3)
8 Painter's frames for rococo triptych a stunning hit (6)
9 A compiler into version of Handel American musicians play (2,5,7)
16 One possibly barking puzzle supplier for the *Morning Star*? (3,6)
17 Oddly keen to block friendly state, one involved in assembly (5,3)
19 See a deer and beat it (7)
21 Night before receiving a signal, one gets rescued (7)
22 Play heroine part and heartless Iago amazingly (6)
24 American soldiers in retreat showing character (5)

Yesterday's solution 28,474



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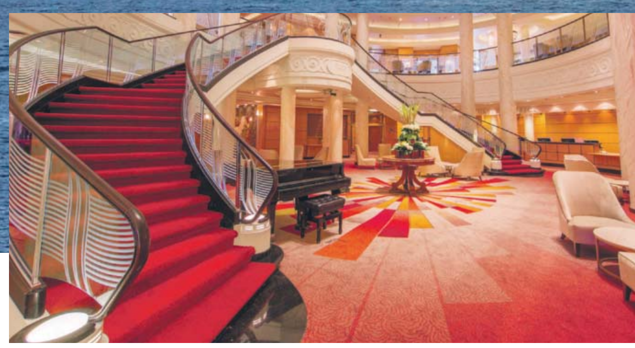
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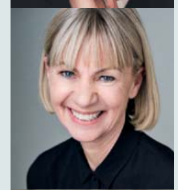
CONFIRMED EXPERTS

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Richard Osman

Richard is a British television producer and presenter on shows including Pointless and Richard Osman's House of Games. The Thursday Murder Club was his first novel, and was the fastest selling adult debut novel since JK Rowling's The Casual Vacancy.



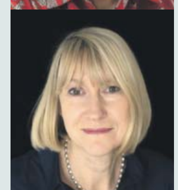
Kate Mosse

A number one international bestselling novelist, playwright and non-fiction writer. The author of six novels and short story collections – including the multimillion-selling Languedoc Trilogy, she is also the Founder Director of the Women's Prize for Fiction.



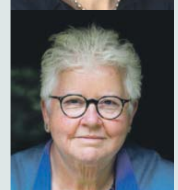
Nikesh Shukla

Nikesh Shukla is a novelist and screenwriter. He is the author of Coconut Unlimited, Meatspace and the critically acclaimed The One Who Wrote Destiny. Nikesh's new book, Brown Baby: A Memoir Of Race, Family And Home was released on Bluebird in February 2021.



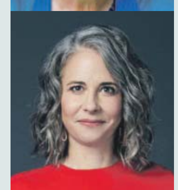
Clare Chambers

Clare Chambers' most recent book, Small Pleasures, became a word-of-mouth bestseller and was longlisted for the Women's Prize 2021 and won Page-turner of the year at the British Book Awards 2022.



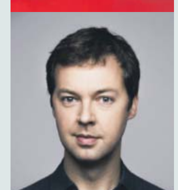
Val McDermid

Val McDermid has sold over 18.5 million books to date across the globe and is translated into more than 40 languages. She is perhaps best-known for her Wire in the Blood series.



Anna Murphy

Anna Murphy joined the Times as Fashion Director in 2015, having previously been the launch editor of Stella magazine at the Sunday Telegraph. Her latest book is called How Not To Wear Black.



Andrew Hunter Murray

Andrew Hunter Murray is an author, comedian and broadcaster. His Sunday Times-bestselling novel The Last Day was published in 2020 and was one of the top ten fiction debuts of that year; his second novel, The Sanctuary, was published in 2022.



Alan Titchmarsh MBE VMH DL

A gardener, writer, novelist and broadcaster best known for programmes such as Ground Force, The Chelsea Flower Show and Secrets of the National Trust. He has written more than fifty gardening books, and twelve novels, ten of which have made the Sunday Times Best-seller List.

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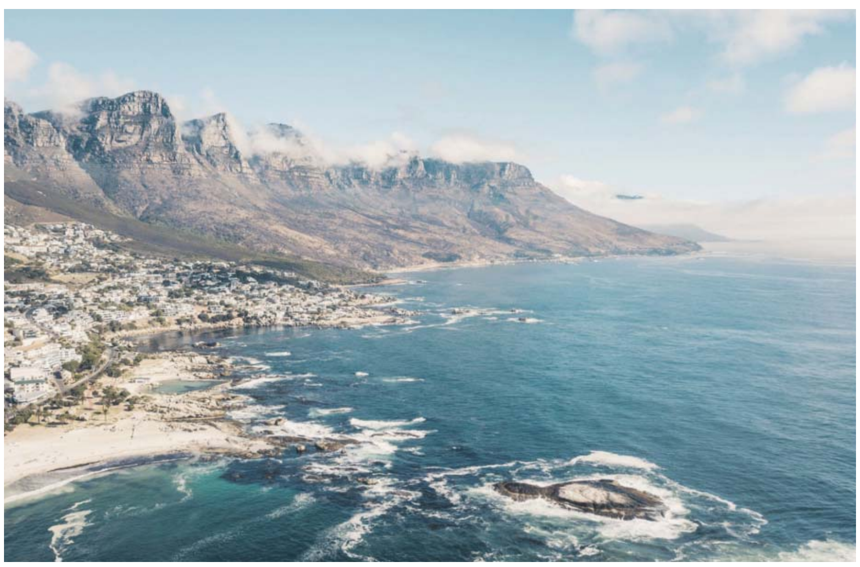
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THE TIMES

2 ARTS

December 16 | 2022



The best of 2022

Our critics choose the top television, films, pop and games of the year

times2

Caitlin Moran
Celebrity Watch



10
UP
Jimi Hendrix

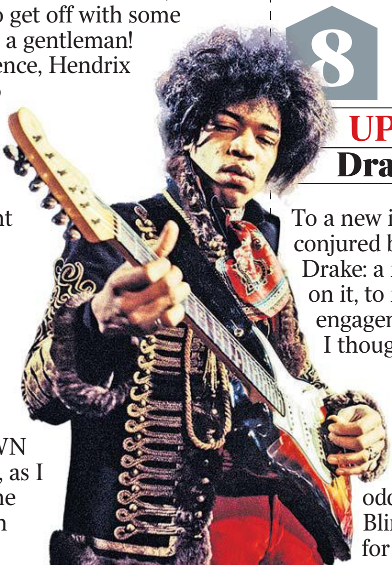
Good morning, sweet Times readers, and welcome to what is the last Celebrity Watch of 2022. Next week's Celebrity Watch awards will provide a full and fruity analysis of the year just gone — one that will, I suspect, be known by future historians as "2022: The WTF-ening" — but for now all that remains is to cast one last, exhausted eye over the cultural landscape and gather up the last waifs and strays of bogglement. For the sake of auld… LOLZ.

This month, Janie Hendrix — sister of Jimi — was interviewed by the DJ Shaun Keaveny and revealed what it was like having a bona fide rock god as a brother.

"It wasn't like him running around the house, yelling and screaming, and acting crazy or breaking things up — like you would do on stage," she revealed. "That wasn't him. He was very shy and quiet — soft-spoken." Janie also revealed that Jimi had a favourite hobby: "He loved to play Monopoly."

Although many have rapidly blinked at this unveiling of Hendrix's unseen polite side, I have to say the clues were all there in the music. After all, in *Purple Haze* — an otherwise full-bore paean to "the ladies" and "the drugs" — Hendrix does sing, "'Scuse me while I kiss the sky." Excuse me! This is a remarkably courteous thing to say given that, according to the song, Hendrix had at the time, "purple haze … all in my brain", didn't know if he was "coming up or down", and was seriously debating if this "was tomorrow or just the end of time".

Frankly, he sounds as if he's completely wigging out and yet still remains gracious enough to formally excuse himself from the room, before attempting to get off with some clouds. What a gentleman! On this evidence, Hendrix probably also apologised to fellow players before collecting rent on hotels on Park Lane, rather than shouting, "HA HA — PAY UP! RENTIER CLASS GONNA OWN YOUR ASS!", as I would imagine Van Morrison would.



9
UP
Volodymyr Zelensky



Last week 26-year-old Ivan Losev of Siberia stood trial and was fined for dreaming about President Zelensky. In a now-deleted Instagram post, Losev recounted a dream he'd had wherein he had been conscripted into the war and taken to a Russian training camp, only for the camp to be invaded by the Ukrainian army.

"They tied everyone up and said they were going to shoot us. But at that moment, Zelensky passes me and says, 'Oh, I saw you on Instagram!'"

Zelensky then freed Losev — only for Losev to ask him for a selfie. "Zelensky said: 'Sure!'"

Within hours of Losev posting his happy dream, Russian officials called him at work and accused him of "discrediting the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation", took him to stand trial, found him guilty and fined him £400.

I admit, this is a difficult story to process. On the one hand, this level of monitoring and suppression of the Russian people is deeply offensive. To be arrested and fined for describing something that didn't even happen is a new low for a paranoid regime.

On the other hand, people describing their dreams is quite boring. I'm not saying the state should have the power to arrest and fine people who fill social media with self-fascinated accounts of wholly random shit their subconsciousness threw up overnight but which is analysed and recounted with all the rigour most people devote to reality or science, yet a warning shot across the bows wouldn't do any harm?

8
UP
Drake



To a new invention, conjured by the *Hotline Bling* hitster Drake: a necklace with 42 diamonds on it, to represent all the engagement rings for "all the times I thought about it but never did".

Of course, we all have different hobbies but wearing a necklace to represent every time you dumped a girlfriend seems odd. I guess it's his… Not-Wife Bling. Thank you. Thank you for listening to my joke.

7
UP
Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez



To a genuine It couple, Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, who recently married 14 years after they broke off their first engagement — hurrah for true love!

This week details about the couple's wedding rings were revealed: Affleck, as a surprise, had "Not. Going. Anywhere" engraved inside Lopez's ring. Apparently this is in reference to the email sign-off he used when the couple were courting second time around and many have seen it as a very tender vow of fidelity.

Obviously I don't want to be a love Grinch, but "Not. Going. Anywhere" does also describe every marriage between two middle-aged people with five children between them. "Theatre? Not going anywhere", "Spontaneous mini-break to Rye? Not going anywhere", "Pop out for a festive pub session with pals? Not going anywhere".

I guess what I'm asking is: is the message in a "love" font, or a "complaining" font?

6
UP
Caprice



More love news: the former underwear model Caprice "welcomed" Hello! magazine into her house to discuss motherhood and marriage. Talking about her seven-year relationship with her husband, Ty Comfort, Caprice noted that she had very high standards while looking for a partner.

"I listed 87 qualities about my perfect man," she told Hello!. "Then, suddenly, boof! I met Ty, and he matched 85 of those qualities."

I don't think I'm an unobservant block of wood, unversed in the complexities of human beings, but I can't think of 37 qualities a person could possess, let alone 87. Nice, reasonably clean, clever, funny, able to change a double duvet cover on their own without making a fuss, asking for help or wandering around pathetically with it draped over your head like an incapable ghost… after these, I'm genuinely struggling.

Is Caprice sure she didn't just mean "87 Quality Street"? That would make more sense. And be delicious.

5
UP
Snow driving



Back on the subject of fines, MailOnline ran a fascinating and timely piece on all the little-known pieces of motoring legislation around "driving in winter weather".

Some of them are obvious: "careless driving" (£5,000), "driving with low visibility" (£1,000), "low tread on tyres" (£10,000). But then we enter the world of, "Really?" "Driving with snow on car roof" (£2,500), "snow on number plates" (£1,000) and, most alarmingly, "driving through puddles" (£5,000).

Driving through puddles is illegal? This might make sense in a desert country where puddles would be both rare and valuable — you don't want to aquaplane through what might be the only nearby source of water for a thirsty gnu — but in Britain? A heavily puddle-based nation? Most of us would go broke driving to the end of our street.

4
UP
Gucci Mane



To the world of music where the successful rapper Gucci Mane has announced the release of his album *So Icy Boyz: The Finale*, which comes in at more than four hours with 80 tracks on it. Although I'm sure this news will delight fans of Mr Mane, I am rather put in mind of the immortal quote supposedly from Noël Coward, after an over-lengthy visit from friends with small, rambunctious children. Finally standing up and opening the front door — all with impeccable calm and courtesy — Coward looked the children in the eye and said firmly, "Children! I feel you have delighted me enough now!"

3
UP
Noddy Holder



As befits Christmas singles being at No 1 in the Celebrity Watch chart, let us take a moment to revel in this week's single greatest news story. "Slade frontman and Christmas icon Noddy Holder wakes his wife up on Christmas Day by screaming his famous, 'It's Chriiiiiistmas!' right down her ear," Cheshire Life magazine revealed.

I have long thought it impossible for me to love Noddy Holder — an irrepressible Midlands dog-man in a mirrored top hat and sideburns like two guinea pigs stapled to his face — any more than I did. Now I know I was wrong.

2

DOWN
Elf on the Shelf



Christmas news, and an alarming report from a family in Cornwall who were engaging in some Elf on the Shelf fun.

For those who have not come across this phenomenon, Elf on the Shelf is an American invention wherein every night mischievous parents hide an elf in the house for the children to discover in the morning. Although the packaging for Elf on the Shelf doesn't explicitly spell it out, the implicit purpose of the Elf on the Shelf myth is that the elf essentially works as some manner of festive Stasi — secretly observing and reporting on the morals of children directly to Santa, who then fills their stockings accordingly. "Elf on the Shelf is watching you!" It's all good, repressive fun.

Anyway, to Cornwall where Max Oliver hid her Elf on the Shelf for the delight/implied threat for her five-year-old son, Charlie. Unfortunately, the place Max chose to hide the elf was "dangling from a lightbulb in the front room". Ten minutes after hiding the elf, Max smelt burning, only to find that the quisling elf's face had been in contact with the hot bulb and was now totally on fire. What remained of the elf is quite, quite horrific.

Max intended to buy a replacement elf but couldn't find one. And now the family have no Elf on the Shelf. I have to say, I'd still use that elf. I think seeing its charred face cavity staring down from a shelf would work a treat on the target audience.

1

UP
LadBaby



Today brings the start of an attempt to break a record — five consecutive Christmas No 1 hits from the comedy/charity outfit LadBaby. Since their first Christmas No 1 in 2018, LadBaby (aka Mark and Roxanne Hoyle) have already trumped Mariah Carey and the Beatles. If this year's single, *Food Aid*, featuring the Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis on vocals (not something any of us expected), goes to No 1, LadBaby will have become the unassailable Titans of Christmas.

In many ways, the history of Christmas songs tells the history of Britain. In the 1970s and 1980s, when British pop was punching way above its weight globally, we racked up a series of absolute, stone-dead sleigh-bell classics: *Merry Xmas Everybody*, *Wonderful Christmastime*, *Happy Xmas (War Is Over)*, *Fairytale of New York*, *Last Christmas*, *I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday*, *Driving Home for Christmas*. All, notably, by working-class artists and bands who had an innate sense of what you want to hear coming from a tinsel-garlanded pub jukebox, or out of the radio in a family-crammed house where bags of sprouts sit on every available surface.

As Noddy hollers, "Are you waiting for the family to arrive?/ Are you sure you got the room to spare inside?/ Does your granny always tell ya/ That the old songs are the best?/ Then she's up and rock'n'rolling with the rest."

In the Noughties, by way of contrast, Christmas pop was owned by Simon Cowell. Seven successive *X Factor* winners bagged the Christmas No 1 spot between 2005 and 2014 — a sign that the management and A&R classes had taken over the sound of Christmas having cannily noted that "Q4" — the quarterly sales between October 1 and December 31 — are the biggest, and, therefore, ripe to be targeted. Cowell's supremacy was only overtaken by the ultimate business move: John Lewis's Christmas adverts, thus prompting the final shift in the meaning of Christmas — popping a jolly Santa hat on the running dogs of capitalism.

Which brings us to LadBaby. Since 2018, and Britain's slide down the global economic rankings, every one of their singles has been for charity. This year they are helping British food banks with their cover of Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas?* — retitled, dolorously, *Feed the UK*.

"The cost of living emergency has created a 'tsunami of need'," the press release says. "With need outstripping donations for the first time in its history, we need to help ensure that food banks keep going this winter."

And so it is that what used to be a jolly, slightly drunk, bravura display of British creativity is now in 2022 essentially musical begging. That Bob Geldof's song about those starving in Africa has had to be retooled for the cold and hungry in Britain is something that once would have been grotesque and unthinkable.

Although it's obviously a goodhearted endeavour, that Christmas Day *Top of the Pops* is likely to feature a song about how the working classes in this country are so desperate they are relying on a novelty song featuring a consumer expert to have Christmas dinner is, frankly, Victorian.

Still, Merry Christmas, everyone!

The hot list
Your guide to the weekend

Film



Scrooge
Alastair Sim is exquisite as Scrooge, the cynical brute who nonetheless hides glimmers of kindness behind those huge, soulful eyes. The 1951 film is darker than most *Christmas Carols*, with shades of gothic horror, but redemption is guaranteed. *See review, page 7. BFI Southbank, SE1 (bfi.org.uk), tomorrow*

Classical



LSO/Rattle
A peaceful interlude before the festive rush: Simon Rattle conducts the London Symphony Orchestra in two intensely personal acts of faith by Szymanowski and Brahms, the Stabat Mater and *A German Requiem* respectively. *Barbican (barbican.org.uk), tomorrow, Sunday*

Comedy



Jordan Gray: Is it a Bird?
The title nods to both Superman and Gray's status as a transgender woman. And if this is a pointed, revealing performance, it's also a propulsive, musical, often very funny one that earned her a nomination for best show at the Edinburgh Comedy Awards this summer. *Soho Theatre, W1 (sohotheatre.com), tonight, tomorrow*

Theatre



Mother Goose
Christmas isn't only for children. The ageless Ian McKellen is enjoying himself no end in this cheerfully chaotic pantomime, with the Liverpudlian comedian John Bishop providing gentle laughter. There are some barnstorming songs amid the double entendres too. *Duke of York's Theatre, WC2 (mothergooseshow.co.uk), tonight, Sunday*

Pop



The Magic Numbers
Brother-sister pairs Romeo and Michele Stodart and Angela and Sean Gannon — aka the Magic Numbers — broke through with folk-rock harmonies and indie pop songs about lost youth and hopeless love. Their popularity grew quickly and affection for them remains. This "Christmas Love-In" will be a joyous, festive affair. *Lafayette, N1 (ticketmaster.co.uk), tonight*

Visual art



Daniel Arsham: Relics in the Landscape
The first UK museum display of work by the American artist Daniel Arsham brings a lunar theme to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park with a playful series of sculptures, featuring moonwalking astronauts and extraterrestrial bicycles. *Yorkshire Sculpture Park (ysp.org.uk), today, tomorrow, Sunday*

cover story

Best of 2022: from Wet Leg to White Lotus

Our critics pick the greatest hits of the past year

Chosen by James Jackson, Carol Midgley, Kevin Maher, Ed Potton, Will Hodgkinson and Joshua Lamb

Best TV

House of the Dragon Sky/Now
Yes, there were dragons, but Paddy Considine's physical decay over an entire series was far more fantastical. The *Game of Thrones* prequel surpassed expectations partly because, by narrowing the focus to the Targaryens it didn't require a degree in Westeros backstory to enjoy it. Matt Smith's antihero Prince Daemon was an instant telly idol.

This Is Going to Hurt BBC1
The adaptation of Adam Kay's memoir about his exhausting, chaotic experience as a hospital doctor angered some, mostly female viewers who objected to the term "brats and twats" as shorthand for obstetrics and gynaecology. But drama-wise it was a triumph, Ben Whishaw playing the lead role with wit and humanity. It pulled off the difficult trick of making the viewer laugh one minute and cry the next, showing what is wrong with the NHS and what is wonderful about it.


Marriage

The White Lotus Sky/Now
So there was no Armond. But we got over it, because series two of the trouble-in-paradise comedy drama just got better and better. It was all about the sex. All the vacationers at the titular five-star hotel (boy, did Sicily look ravishing) were at it, and always against their better judgment. Aubrey Plaza's appalled reactions deserved their own compilation reel.

Marriage BBC1
Arguably the stand-out drama of the year, this exquisitely observed paean to ordinary, humdrum marriage and the small agonies and indignities of human existence was a quiet masterpiece. Sean Bean and Nicola Walker in the lead roles helped make domestic drudgery a thing of beauty.

Better Call Saul Netflix
Anyone who'd stuck with the story of the criminal lawyer Jimmy McGill/Saul Goodman over five series (and through *Breaking Bad*) would have expected the final series, split over two halves, to be a class apart and wholly original. And so it proved, from a blisteringly tense stand-off to an extended coda imagining Jimmy's post-lawyer life in Nebraska. Longform TV as a work of art.


Rina Sawayama

Sherwood BBC1
James Graham's drama about a series of murders and how the 1980s miners' strike caused a bitter social rupture in a Nottinghamshire town that toxified the community for decades was a complex story beautifully written. Starring David Morrissey, Lesley Manville and Adeel Akhtar, it was sharply prescient, the industrial disputes of the 1980s mirroring 2022's "summer of discontent".

The Bear Disney+
It was set in a hot Chicago beef sandwich restaurant, and it had the hottest reviews of the year. Amid the chaos of the kitchen's hard graft, the dramas of a young star chef, Carmy, newly returned to the family business, and his colleagues were at first stressfully propulsive, before the flavours deepened like a slow-cooked rib joint. Worth watching? Yes, chef!

Somewhere Boy Channel 4
Somewhere Boy was a classic example of a writer's skill turning a miserable premise (a man suffers a breakdown after his wife is killed, and becomes so depressed and unhinged he keeps his young son prisoner in their house, telling him there are monsters outside) into something sweet, tender, funny and life-affirming. Pete Jackson's drama was helped by a great cast, but mainly the two young men in the lead roles, Lewis Gribben as Danny and Samuel Bottomley as Aaron.

The Responder BBC1
What sounded on paper to be another same old "gritty police drama starring cop with troubled life" was electrifying. Written by Tony Schumacher, a former police officer and taxi driver from Liverpool, it portrayed the mental unravelling of an officer (Martin Freeman) sent to deal with random events. What made it different from all the rest was its jagged authenticity.

Am I Being Unreasonable? BBC1
From the opening scene — a ghastly accident on a train platform — this was not going to be everyone's cup of tea. Yet this six-part word-of-mouth hit was wilfully its own thing: a warped home counties comedy, and a psychodrama with surprises galore. As a dissatisfied wife hiding a grief she can't share, Daisy May Cooper showed she can do more than lols.


The White Lotus





Best films

Triangle of Sadness In cinemas
The super-rich on a super-yacht, getting super-sick (in a super-storm). Ruben Ostlund's social satire, despite the chundering, was a sophisticated treat stuffed with winning performances from a cast led by Woody Harrelson and the Filipina actress Dolly de Leon. It was ultimately a pitiless dissection of the power imbalances in all human relationships. But funny.

Top Gun: Maverick Amazon, Apple TV+, SkyStore
Tom Cruise at his most messianic single-handedly "saved" blockbuster cinema with this £1.2 billion-earning sequel that sent our 60-year-old fly-boy hero up against an unnamed enemy, a uranium enrichment plant and some deadly "fifth generation" fighter planes. Glorious, adrenaline-fuelled nonsense, delivered with class and unexpected heart.

The Wonder Netflix
Florence Pugh topped off a turbulent year of personal lowlights — publicised break-up, media rows over *Don't Worry Darling* — with a muscular reminder of just why she's the so-called new Rampling, Dench, Redgrave etc. She proved a visceral, galvanising force in this literary adaptation about myth and miracles in 19th-century Ireland. One of the performances of 2022.

Decision to Leave mubi.com
The humble cop drama was given an injection of gob-smacking audacity by Korean maestro Park Chan-wook (*Oldboy*). The tale of a jaded police detective (Park Hae-il) and a femme fatale (Tang Wei) unfolded with flashbacks, flash-forwards, scenes within scenes, clever cuts and narrative bluffs until everything suddenly ended on a beach, with a death and harrowing sadness. Genius.

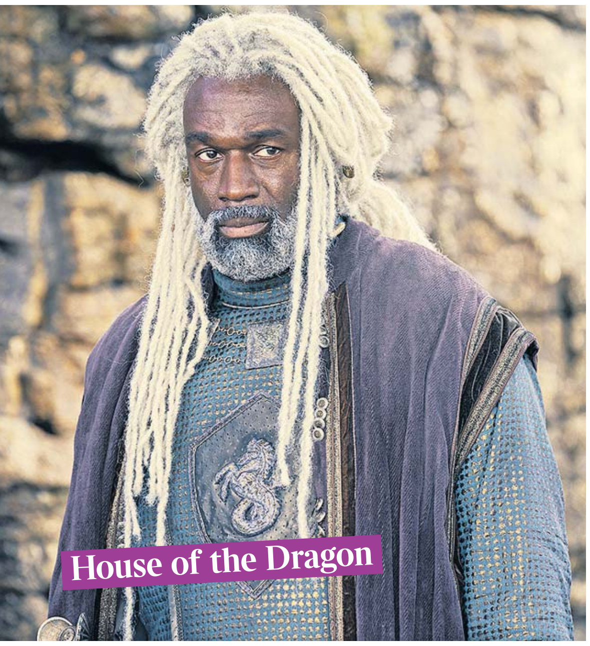
Official Competition Amazon, Apple TV+
One of the year's most neglected and under-marketed movies was one of the smartest film-biz takedowns of the modern era. Antonio Banderas and Penélope Cruz were wickedly funny as, respectively, the pampered action star and the white-hot director hoping to make a trophy-worthy masterpiece. The satire was precise, witty and savage. Perhaps too savage?

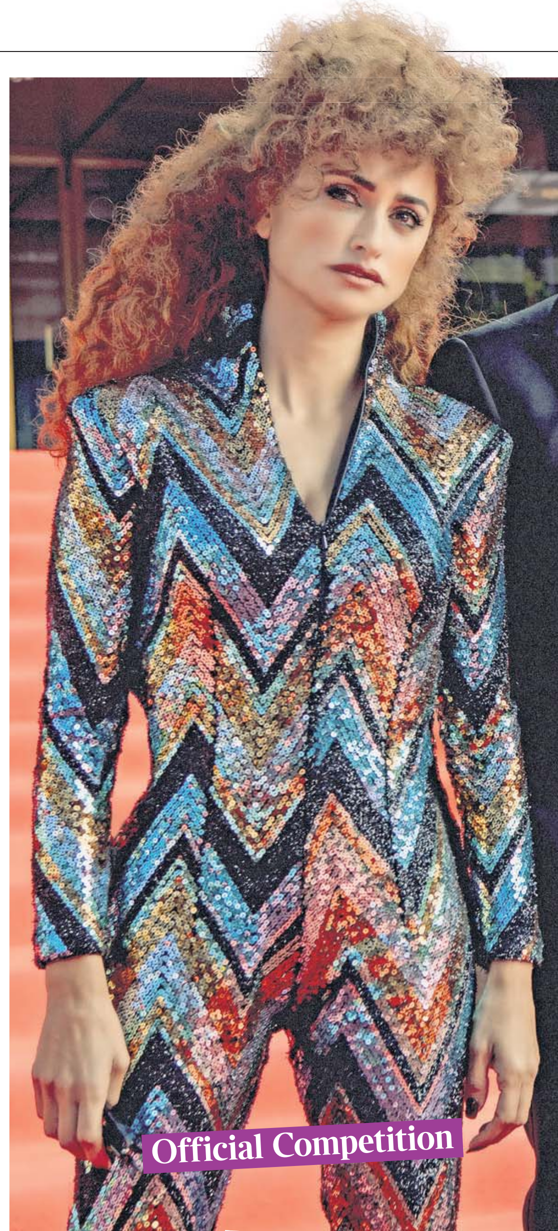
Everything Everywhere All at Once Amazon
A humane and wildly inventive comedy in which Michelle Yeoh's launderette owner connects with versions of herself, raccoons control chefs à la *Ratatouille,* and Jamie Lee Curtis has the moves of a WWE wrestler. Mad, but really lovely.

The Banshees of Inisherin In cinemas
"You didn't do anything to me. I just don't like you no more," Colm

FABIO LOVINO/HBO; MATT SQUIRE/BBC; MANOLO PAVON; HBO


Sherwood


House of the Dragon


Official Competition

(Brendan Gleeson) tells his mate Pádraic (Colin Farrell) in Martin McDonagh's Guinness-black comedy, set on an island during the Irish Civil War in 1923. No film made me laugh as hard this year, but it's also exquisitely sad, the explosions on the mainland echoing a rift between friends.

Aftersun In cinemas
The debut by the Scottish director Charlotte Wells stars Paul Mescal of *Normal People* as a divorced father on holiday with his 11-year-old daughter Sophie (Frankie Corio). A subtly told story of paternal love and past trauma.

Navalny Amazon
Its sting sharpened by the Ukraine War, Daniel Roher's documentary focuses on Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader who was the victim of an assassination attempt in 2020. Navalny is brave, charismatic and witty, fooling agents into explaining how they tried to poison him with Novichok.

Hit the Road Amazon
Another astonishing directorial debut. Panah Panahi gave us domestic drama, political jeopardy and musical numbers in a vibrant road movie about an Iranian family making their way to the Turkish border.

Best pop albums

Rina Sawayama: Hold the Girl Dirty Hit
The Cambridge philosophy graduate Rina Sawayama employed everything from hoary stadium rock and cheesy Euro dance to new age ambience and flipped it on its head, embracing camp artifice as a way of addressing such heavy subjects as childhood trauma, mother-daughter relationships and low self-esteem. The result is an album of mainstream pop at its most charged and challenging.

Kendrick Lamar: Mr Morale and the Big Steppers Top Dawg
Pulitzer prizewinner Lamar held on to his greatest rapper in the world title with a deeply musical hip-hop classic that is accessible and exploratory. Beth Gibbons of Portishead pops up on the beautiful *Mother I Sober*, while elsewhere Lamar grapples with success (*United in Grief*), reincarnation (*Worldwide Steppers*) and self-pity (*We Cry Together*).

Jockstrap: I Love You Jennifer B Rough Trade
Guildhall graduates Georgia Ellery and Taylor Skye applied their classical training to weirdo pop of charm and imagination on this unclassifiable debut. Everything from Ariana Grande-style vocal gymnastics to classic indie rock finds its way in, but never at the expense of a good tune. Most appealing is the mood of playfulness.

Weyes Blood: And in the Darkness, Hearts Aglow Sub Pop
The ghost of Karen Carpenter runs through the latest by Pennsylvania's Natalie Mering, whose soaring, melancholic voice combines with an ability to tackle modern problems in a languorous fashion. Mering takes on the pandemic and its psychological aftermath, but in a way that wouldn't sound out of place in a red velvet supper club. Soothing yet unsettling, this is a glorious listen.

Suede: Autofiction BMG
Is it possible for a beloved Nineties band to reunite with their dignity intact? Suede did it by making an album about the challenges of middle age, without Brett Anderson resorting to moaning about back pain or his growing dependence on Viagra. Reduced expectations, making long-term relationships work and holding onto a fanbase are all tackled, with the band's signature blend of high drama and grainy art-rock.

Big Thief: Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You 4AD
Having established themselves as the natural inheritors to the Band's well-worn brand of rootsy Americana, these New Yorkers outdid themselves on their latest. Equal parts fun, convivial and heartbreaking, songs that combine nonsense poetry with evocations of loneliness and camaraderie are driven along by Adrianne Lenker's scratchy, childlike voice and an overriding sense of Dylanesque profundity.

Fontaines DC: Skinty Fia Partisan
On their third album the Dublin rock band up the intensity, the singer Grian Chatten channelling Ian Curtis and Liam Gallagher as he sings about love, politics and, on *Jackie Down the Line*, murder. The old poetic sensibility and punk attitude is aligned to a new sense of ambition, proof that you need not lose character to become a major proposition.


The Banshees of Inisherin

Michael Head & The Red Elastic Band: Dear Scott Modern Sky
After a lifetime on the margins in cult bands such as Shack and the Pale Fountains, Liverpool's Michael Head came through the bad times to deliver a masterpiece. Gentle folk rock, Bacharach-style easy listening and psychedelic flourishes form the perfect bedrock for Head's Mersey poet reflections on childhood, alcoholism and heartbreak, leading to a much deserved breakthrough 40 years in the making.

Wet Leg: Wet Leg Domino
Having popped out of the pandemic with 2021's breakout hit *Chaise Longue*, these Isle of Wight jokers seemed like one-hit wonders… until their album came along. With enough character, wit and straightforward but catchy tunes to make guitar music exciting again, the band led by Rhian Teasdale and Hester Chambers have brought attitude back to indie rock in a way not seen since the Strokes.


Horizon Forbidden West

The Comet is Coming: Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam Impulse!
An instrumental jazz-rave epic about technology, humanity, spirituality, the universe and how they are all bound together by one giant cosmic internet? Why not? The latest release featuring the prolific Brit jazz wunderkind Shabaka Hutchings is a trippy triumph, combining virtuoso musicianship with a cosmic vision.

Best games

God of War Ragnarök PS5, PS4
The sequel to the 2018 Game Awards game of the year, *God of War*, had players facing the fallout from the events of Ragnarök's predecessor, as well as dealing with the impending, titular Norse war. The relationship between god Kratos and his son Atreus is once again pivotal to the core of this game, its blockbuster action sequences often surpassed by some of the best scenes of drama in gaming. Despite the PS5 being only two years old, *Ragnarök* has staked a claim to be this generation's best game.

Horizon Forbidden West PS5, PS4
The most visually breathtaking game of the year, its use of colour, light and shadow bringing to life the richness and depth of a world blending green vistas with the metallic scars of an industrial past. Aloy, the returning heroine from 2017's *Horizon Zero Dawn*, again battles a variety of mechanical reptiles to save the remnants of humanity in this post-apocalyptic, third-person action adventure. Gaming at its finest.

Elden Ring PS5, PS4, Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, Steam
A slow-burner as FromSoftware, the studio behind challenging games such as *Bloodborne* and *Dark Souls* brought its trademark brutally difficult gameplay to a game that requires resilience and deep breaths. A collaboration with the *Game of Thrones* author George RR Martin, in *Elden Ring* players navigate a world drenched in lore as a hero on a crusade to rid the monster-infested plains of an evil curse. The quest's grandeur is matched only by the map that players inhabit.

A Plague Tale: Requiem PS5, Xbox Series X/S, Nintendo Switch, Steam (Cloud version)/ included with Xbox Game Pass
Set in a fictional 14th-century France, *Requiem* followed the unexpected hit of 2019, *Innocence*, as protagonist Amicia's plight to help her brother fight a supernatural disease continued. Again she must overcome troops of soldiers and torrents of flesh-eating rats. Paranoia and indignation bleed out of the actors' performances, with lifelike animations combining to make *Requiem* an unforgettable experience.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Shredder's Revenge PS5, PS4, Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, Steam/included with Xbox Game Pass
Reviving vintage beat-'em-up franchises is becoming a theme for Dotemu, which breathed new life into the *Streets of Rage* series in 2020. Alongside the studio Tribute Games, in *Shredder's Revenge* it delivered a side-scrolling brawler reminiscent of *Battletoads* and *Turtles in Time*. The cartoonish visuals left players pining for their youth as they battled through 16 levels filled with Turtles villains such as Bebop and Rocksteady. A slice of retro button-bashing mayhem that modern gaming sorely misses.

Richard Morrison the arts column

Trite pop songs shouldn't replace traditional carols in our schools

As cultural historians point out every December, most of the ingredients of the "traditional British Christmas" are neither very traditional nor very British. Santa Claus, at least in his white-bearded, red-coated, ho-ho-hoing manifestation, was invented by 19th-century Americans. The bizarre notion of uprooting a tree and decorating it in your home was imported from the Continent by Queen Victoria's German in-laws. Christmas cards became a trendy thing only in the 1840s.

Other supposedly ancient Christmas imagery originated in the fertile imaginations of Charles Dickens, Henry Selfridge and Walt Disney, none of whom is a particularly ancient figure. And many of the carols we think have been around for ever — such classics as *O Holy Night*, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *Once in Royal David's City* and *Good King Wenceslas* (all of which I expect to feature in a concert of "the nation's favourite carols" at the London Coliseum on December 18, broadcast on Sky Arts on December 22) — turn out to be not much older than the London Tube.

Many, but not all. Some carols do connect us with the people who lived on these isles in pre-industrial or even medieval times. The ironic thing is that we owe our knowledge of those carols to the Victorians as well. Had it not been for a group of musical antiquarians who went around Britain in the 1890s and early 1900s collecting folk songs, those ancestral words and tunes would have disappeared for ever.

One of those collectors was the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, who was born 150 years ago. That anniversary has been much celebrated with performances of his symphonies, operas and, of course, his ethereal hit, *The Lark Ascending*. At Christmas, however, it's appropriate that we recall the wonderful carols he saved from oblivion by travelling from village to village and getting old people to sing (from memory) the ditties that had been passed from parent to child for generations.

In rural Surrey, for instance, Vaughan Williams came across a 73-year-old farm labourer called Henry Gorman who sang a folk song called *The Ploughboy's Dream*. Vaughan Williams was so struck by the tune's noble simplicity that he fitted it to the words of a 19th-century American hymn, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, gave it the title *Forest Green* (after the village where Gorman lived), and included it in the first edition of *The English Hymnal*, which he edited in 1906. Within a few years it had become one of Britain's most familiar carols.

It's a similar story with the *Sussex Carol* ("On Christmas night all Christians sing"), which was one of eight folk songs sung to Vaughan Williams (in Sussex, obviously) by an old lady called Harriet Verrall. That's an exuberant scamper of a carol. By contrast, when Vaughan Williams was in Herefordshire he collected one of the most sublimely serious of folk carols: a haunting melody set to the words *This Is the Truth Sent from Above*. I must have heard it a hundred times and its austere beauty still sends shivers down my spine.

SALLY ANDERSON/ALAMY



Pupils at St Ninian's Primary School in Edinburgh get into the Christmas spirit

Vaughan Williams's song-collecting expeditions were spurred, I believe, by four things. The first was musical. As with most composers in the early 1900s, he was looking for a way of escaping from the heavily chromatic style of Wagner and Elgar. English folk songs weren't tonal, they followed the contours of ancient modes rather than major or minor keys. Vaughan Williams seized on this as a way of liberating his own harmonies and melodies from Teutonic influence.

> "When we sing ancient carols we tap into the roots of our culture

The second motivation was conservation. In the late-Victorian era socially aware intellectuals realised that rural England was being obliterated by industrialisation and urbanisation. As millions moved from countryside to town their folk culture disappeared, including the rich heritage of music that was never written down. Vaughan Williams and his fellow collectors sensed, correctly, that they were the last generation with a chance of saving this heritage. Their bicycling trips to old people in old villages were crusades, as well as jolly ways to spend the weekend.

However, they also had a genuine respect for these ordinary people who had extraordinary stores of folk songs lodged in their memories — and that was Vaughan Williams's third motivation. He was descended from two famous public-spirited dynasties — the Wedgwoods and the Darwins — and throughout his life he thought of music primarily as a form of public service. Giving folk song, the music of ordinary people, the respect it deserved was one of the ways in which he served those people.

And his fourth motivation? It brings us back to Christmas and what it means to different people. Vaughan Williams was not a conventional Christian believer but he did have an immense sense of spirituality, rooted in the landscapes, architecture, literature and music of England. That meant he also had a deep empathy for those who did believe, and for the music through which they expressed their belief, whether it was a complex Tudor motet or an unharmonised folk carol.

Few things we do today link us directly to the people who lived in this country centuries ago. Our lives are utterly different. Yet when we sing the ancient carols that Vaughan Williams collected, we are transported back in time. We are tapping directly into the roots of our culture — indeed, the roots of many cultures, because it's astonishing how variants of the same folk tune pop up in different counties, different countries, even different continents.

Today, I fear, those old carols need preserving all over again. I'm mildly alarmed to note how, in so many school nativity plays I have attended, the familiar old carols have been swept aside in favour of trite seasonal pop songs, often cleansed of any "controversial" references to Jesus Christ.

We diminish our culture when we censor the past. More to the point, we diminish our experience of this great midwinter feast. There's no better way to get into the Christmas mood than belting out those glorious old carols in the company of family and friends.

It's no Fairytale, Rishi

The revelation that the prime minister listens to Michael Bublé while writing his Christmas cards had me rushing to sample the Canadian crooner's seasonal album — which turns out to be mostly bland recyclings of songs that Bing Crosby was singing before even I was born. I must say, though, that it's a perfect musical match for Rishi Sunak. It's immaculately manicured, strenuously inoffensive and projects a kind of winter-wonderland feelgood glow in which everyone is warm, wealthy, well fed and feeling loved.



The reality for many people, of course, is much closer to the Christmas pop song that is regularly voted the nation's favourite: the Pogues' acidic, disillusioned and thoroughly believable *Fairytale of New York*. I would be amazed, however, if Rishi had the empathy to identify with the washed-out, debauched down-and-outs portrayed by Kirsty MacColl and Shane MacGowan in that magnificently bitter masterpiece. They don't teach you about that world at Winchester College or Goldman Sachs.

THE CRITICS

Will Hodgkinson hears the Christmas albums p9
Dominic Maxwell climbs Julian Clary's beanstalk p12
Carol Midgley settles in for Harry & Meghan p15

Awash with the same watery scenes

the big film

It may be cutting edge, but this three-hour borefest could do with a hefty chop, says Kevin Maher


ALAMY
Neytiri (Zoe Saldaña) and Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) are living a blissful family life — until the "sky people" turn up to threaten Pandora again

James Cameron has done it again. No, really, he has. He has slavishly remade his 2009 box office-smashing sci-fi *Avatar* and called it *Avatar: The Way of Water*. The difference is in the title and the suggestion that the movie, though still based on the bioluminescent planet of Pandora, has this time established a different, oceanic milieu, complete with alternate narrative parameters, characters and dramatic crises. If only. Everything here is retread, restate, regurgitate.

And so we're back with the monotonal soldier hero Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), who's living his best life in a blue Na'vi body with hissing jungle hottie Neytiri (Zoe Saldaña) and their newly acquired brood of dragon-riding brats. There's boring eldest son Neteyam (Jamie Flatters), bad boy rebel Lo'ak (Britain Dalton), sensitive adopted daughter Kiri (Sigourney Weaver, doing squeaky voice) and near-mute youngest Tuk, who's the Maggie Simpson of the gang. "The thing about happiness?" Jake says, while contemplating familial bliss. "It can vanish in a heartbeat." And cue the arrival, once again, of the "sky people". No, they don't want to fix your set-top box, they're the evil human military industrial complex that didn't learn its lesson from the first *Avatar* and is now back to destroy Pandora all over again.

In the previous film the evil humans were driven by a lust for the rare mineral "unobtanium", but this one is totally different. Now they're driven by a resource lust for the rare chemical fluid "amrita", described as "ounce for ounce the single most valuable substance known to man". Sigh. It's difficult to overstate how samey this is. Jake and his family, just one step ahead of the murderous colonisers, flee to a reef community of Metkayina folk. And there he must earn the acceptance of an initially hostile tribe before accidentally bringing down upon them an advancing army of gun-toting military maniacs in metal exoskeletons.

Worst of all, even the villain is the same. Yes, the psychopathic, genocidal Colonel Miles Quaritch (Stephen Lang), who was previously fatally skewered with arrows, is back again, also occupying a Na'vi body, and barking out the same lines of dialogue. "We're not in Kansas any more," he says, referencing the first movie referencing *The Wizard of Oz*. But as painful lessons from film flops such as *The Wiz, Return to Oz* and *Oz the Great and Powerful* have shown, you cannot credibly go back to Oz again. You can't replicate that first transformative moment when Dorothy steps into Oz in colour, or Jake Sully steps out on to Pandora as a Na'vi. All films built on that "through the looking glass" moment suffer this crisis.

Obviously it's all spectacular. A rumoured budget of £325 million (also covering early work on Avatar 3, 4 and 5) will do that. But it's also visually samey and chockful of needless sequences and side stories that, in the hands of another less ostentatious film-maker, would have hit the cutting room floor. The final fist fight is also ridiculous. It's a rip-off of Cameron's own *Titanic* climax, but also the most tedious and overstretched screen donnybrook since John Wayne and Victor McLaglen punched their way across an Irish county in *The Quiet Man*.

The high-definition, 48-frames-per-second shooting rate that's deployed for the action sequences is horrible. It's crisp, yes, but looks like glassy, unfiltered phone footage. The film's "primitivist" politics — all technology is bad — seem slightly dubious when inserted into a film that owes its very existence to cutting-edge visuals.

The running time is problematic. Pandora is a mildly diverting place to visit for a couple of hours, probably 90 minutes at best. There is nothing here that warrants a near three-and-a-quarter-hour trip. By the end it's aggressively uninteresting.

In cinemas

Avatar: The Way of Water
12A, 192min
★★☆☆☆

classic film of the week

Scrooge (1951)
U, 83min
★★★★★

Alastair Sim is Scrooge. It's that simple. On film, at least, he has never been bettered. His Dickens antihero is definitive, a cynical brute who nonetheless seems to be hiding tiny glimmers of kindness behind those huge, sad and soulful eyes.

The film is darker than most *Christmas Carols*, with shades of gothic horror — Michael Hordern's howling Jacob Marley is genuinely terrifying. And Sim leans into that darkness early on, with his Scrooge famously pushing preteen carol singers from the pavement and describing Christmas as "a poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every 25th of December!"

But redemption is guaranteed, and he plays it exquisitely, especially with a climactic and deeply moving Shakespearean roar: "I'm not the man I was!"

Kevin Maher

At the BFI Southbank and on Amazon


Alastair Sim, right, as Scrooge, with Michael Hordern's Jacob Marley

film reviews

Meta gags ruin a cat caper that's not a patch on Pixar

Terry Pratchett's moggy tale has been mostly mangled, miaows Kevin Maher



The Amazing Maurice
PG, 93min
★★☆☆☆

Terry Pratchett's inspired twist on the Brothers Grimm is, in this feature-length animation, mostly mangled — by the American screenwriter of *Shrek*, by two little-known German co-directors and by a voice cast of British thespians on surprisingly low-key form. Hugh Laurie waffles through the proceedings amiably enough as Maurice, the feline star of Pratchett's *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. He's a wisecracking protagonist who plans, with the aid of his chattering rat pack and a human sidekick called Keith (Himesh Patel), to perform a Pied Piper scam on the residents of the tiny Germanic town of Bad Blintz. Keith will play the pipe. The rats will display stupefaction. Maurice will collect the cash.

In this version, however, the screenwriter Terry Rossio has given Pratchett an ironic makeover (…because?), and so the mayor's daughter Malicia (Emilia Clarke, on full bland) is now an on-screen character and a chatty narrator who repeatedly addresses the camera in the style of *Fleabag* or Dakota Johnson in *Persuasion*. Malicia is reading a Beatrix Potter-inspired story ("Mr Bunnsy Has an Adventure") that she repeatedly refers to as a "framing device", one that permits her simultaneously to ridicule the simplicity of Potter while interrupting the action with pointlessly meta reflections that begin with: "This is the bit where…" Just what every kids' movie needs: creaky gags about poststructural textual analysis!

This might not have mattered so much if the characters around Malicia were lively, witty or even, yes, animated. Instead these educated rodents are oddly interchangeable. Gemma Arterton's biggest moment, for instance, involves appearing in the end credits (you won't have noticed her lines), while only a throaty David Thewlis makes much of an impression, as the evil Boss Man. The co-directors Toby Genkel and Florian Westermann stage a couple of nice set pieces, including a tense rat coursing sequence. But it's ultimately not a patch on Pixar. Or the Cartoon Saloon stuff (*Wolfwalkers*). Or Netflix animation (*The Sea Beast*). Etc. Etc.

In cinemas and on Sky Cinema



Hugh Laurie voices Maurice the cat, alongside Himesh Patel as his human sidekick Keith and Gemma Arterton as Peaches the rat, left

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Backstreet's back — but why did they bother?

The boy band pall, but a festive jazz take on Charlie Brown delights

Will Hodgkinson

If you are seeking to recreate in your own home that feeling of dashing from an icy street into a department store, where your multiple layers start to feel as though they're strangling you and the sheer volume of potential presents you can't begin to afford brings on a migraine, look no further than *A Very Backstreet Christmas* by Backstreet Boys (★☆☆☆☆, BMG). The usual chestnuts — *White Christmas, Winter Wonderland* — are roasted once more, this time with a distinct lack of flavour, making the album sound like exactly the kind of thing that pipes through the speakers as you rush in vain to get that last remaining Barbie holiday doll and wonder why you have willingly surrendered yourself to such consumer hell. Michael Bublé does the festive cheese far better than a former boy band who became men a long time ago, calling into question the very purpose of an album that brings nothing new to the festive table. This is one to leave in the department store.

Only slightly more tasteful is *A Family Christmas* by Andrea, Matteo and Virginia Bocelli (★★☆☆☆, Decca), on which the world-famous tenor teams up with his 24-year-old son and ten-year-old daughter to enjoy the kind of Christmas that we mere mortals, judging by the Bocellis' Versace mansion-style world of white presents, white baubles and white-clothed people depicted on the cover, can but dream of. Little Virginia may have a lovely voice, but as she duets with her dad on *Over the Rainbow* you have to ask yourself: is she really going to thank him for this in six years' time? The whole thing reeks of impossible luxury and zero humour, although there is something to be said for all three going for it with an impressive lack of irony on John Lennon's *Happy Xmas (War is Over)*.



Backstreet Boys, festive failures, unlike Joss Stone, right



christmas pop

Jazz review
Louis Armstrong's first Christmas album. thetimes.co.uk/arts

Joss Stone, too, revisits the standards on *Merry Christmas, Love* (★★★☆☆, Polydor), but she does at least have a unique and arresting singing voice, which propelled her to fame as a Devonian teenager with 2003's retro-styled album *The Soul Sessions*. *Winter Wonderland* gets the full Disney treatment, with heavenly backing choir and tinkling sleigh bells, but not all the selections are completely and utterly obvious: Stevie Wonder's *What Christmas Means to Me* is, surprisingly, not one of the festive standards, and Stone brings out its swinging charm admirably.

Going for a similarly soulful approach, but with a bizarre lack of character, is Alicia Keys on *Santa Baby* (★★☆☆☆, Apple Music/Alicia Keys Records). The one original, *December Back 2 June*, is one of Keys's weakest songs, and she goes into full sultry mode on a soporific *Santa Baby* in a way that's weirdly clinical.

Here is one of the greatest voices latter-day New York has produced bashing out a standard-issue festive stocking-filler — professional but dull. Keys does at least provide a version of the unfailingly melancholic *Christmas Time Is Here*. That should send you hurtling towards *A Charlie Brown Christmas (Super Deluxe Edition)* by the Vince Guaraldi Trio (★★★★☆, Fantasy), because the original version of the song, with its off-key children's choir and gentle shuffle against a simple piano line, brings hair-tingling impact any amount of emoting from Keys cannot come close to.

Here is a Christmas album worthy of the title: a respected cool jazz trio turning their chops to the commercially savvy but creatively inspiring idea of songs for America's favourite cartoon about a continually downtrodden little boy who never seemed to be able to share in the festive cheer he saw all around him.

The album was a soundtrack to a 1965 television special of the same name, and Guaraldi's masterstroke — perennially missed by the Bocellis, Backstreet Boys and Keys of this world — was to make an album that captures not just the joy, but the disappointment and imperfection that Christmas inevitably brings. It is never as good as it seems, which is what his hesitant, pause-filled piano on *O Tannenbaum* and the carol-singers' bum notes on *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing* evokes. There is fun to be had too, of course. *Linus & Lucy* sounds like trying to get to sleep on Christmas Eve feels, while *Skating* hops along with the zest of trying out your new toys on Boxing Day. The whole thing provides a deeper capturing of the conflicting moods of Christmas than the countless more upbeat albums out there — and it is ultimately far more rewarding.

Sugary sopranos, creaky choirboys and vivacious Vespers

Christmas albums from leading classical singers are hardly novel, but they rarely come with the twinkling embrace and heart-warming kiss of Diana Damrau's *My Christmas* (★★★☆☆, Erato). Her wish, she writes, is to share her "own personal Christmas, as I experienced it as a child", although I doubt that little Diana was toddling around her Bavarian home with the NDR Radiophilharmonie, singing Bach, Handel and Mozart, the classy repertoire at the back end of this lavish double album.

The soprano's bright vocal flights are accompanied these days by a widening vibrato, which proves wearying when heard over 35 tracks. But she always means what she sings, and those seeking notes that don't wobble can take comfort in the hit of Matthias Höfs's trumpet playing, featured in the more celebratory items. To reach this core classical fare, however, we must navigate a bucket of carols and such — many squashed together in medleys and tarted up with orchestral arrangements by Richard Whilds compounded of glitter and cheese. Some lovely German music is encountered (Humperdinck, Reger), but listener acceptability depends on whether you're prepared to indulge your sweet tooth — having just been to the dentist, I'm being cautious.

This was why I couldn't collapse with delight over *Christmas Carols at King's* (★★☆☆☆, Decca Classics), the underwhelming result of repackaging vintage recordings by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, with new accompaniments from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra that drape the choir with celestial violins, or damage clarity by bulking up the sound.

christmas classical

Diana Damrau: bright with patches of vibrato



Happily, nothing eats into the delights on offer from the superb voices of Nigel Short's Tenebrae. The music of *In Winter's House* (★★★★☆, Signum Classics) is 20th/21st-century British, with Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* at the centre, performed with freshness and joy from a choir glimpsed in the booklet photos huddled in scarves in an obviously cold London church. Their passion and precision — the group's watchwords — equally warm the air in Edward Naylor's tumultuous Advent anthem *Vox dicentis*, another highlight of a rewarding programme neatly mixing new friends and old.

Satisfaction is guaranteed with Monteverdi's *Christmas Vespers* (★★★★☆, Deutsche Grammophon) — not a work that actually exists, although the speculative collection of pieces gathered by Andrea Marcon and his group La Cetra proves utterly compelling and uplifting. Part of the album's joy lies in the recording's resonant church acoustic and the period tang of the on-site organ — key agents in fusing together singers and instrumentalists in contrapuntal glory.

Two other foot-tapping Christmas-themed releases offer purely instrumental baroque music. Quirky composers (Vivaldi, Biber, Schmelzer) run riot in *La Notte*, a delightful album from Bojan Cicic's spirited Illyria Consort (★★★★☆, Delphian). There is also the dazzling German recorder player Dorothee Oberlinger leading the way, sometimes with bagpipes, through *Pastorale* (★★★★☆, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi) — an over-boisterous album, perhaps, but it helped me to banish memories of one low point from my Christmas discards: hearing *O Come All Ye Faithful* boringly sung in Norwegian.

Geoff Brown

podcasts

WARNER BROS/ALAMY

Tortoise tiptoes around a toxic debate

A careful look at a controversial NHS clinic is hamstrung by fear of offence, says James Marriott

I am not sure I've ever listened to a podcast so hedged about with warnings, caveats, pre-emptive apologies and clarifications. For this week, the subject is trans rights, that cheerfully uncontroversial subject which has inspired humanity to new heights of reasoned discourse, cheerful jolly disagreement and polite debate. Ho ho.

The Tavistock: Inside the Gender Clinic, from Tortoise Media, is (eventually) about the NHS's gender identity service (GIDS), specifically its centre, the Tavistock clinic in London; the clinic is due to close (by spring 2023) after concerns that children were being prescribed puberty blockers without proper oversight. But before it's about that, its host, Polly Curtis, must indulge in much good-natured fretting over the various people she may offend. The trans debate, she cautions (in a suitably apocalyptic mixed metaphor), is "a nuclear-level toxic row". It is "such a toxic debate" that when she asks an interviewee what they think makes them trans, she has to caution that even this apparently innocent question can "feel really loaded". She wonders whether it is her place to "wade into this, to ask questions such as this".

At one point the cautious Curtis tries to explain that although one interviewee's "birth sex is female, he now identifies as a boy" — but she quickly finds herself bogged down in another apology. As she explains: "Even the way I said that is problematic. Let me explain. For some, the acceptable way to say this is assigned female at birth…"

If you're not on Twitter — where the culture wars rage perpetually — this must all seem baffling. Who could be offended by this cautious and illuminating investigation? If you're on Twitter you know what's going on. Curtis has an imagined army of anonymous critics on her shoulder, ready to pounce on the slightest slip.

I'm all for being polite, but this does mean the narrative moves at a slower pace than it might. It takes a while to get to the story of GIDS, which is fascinating. For ages it was a small clinic that suddenly found itself at the epicentre of a gender revolution. In 2011 the number of referrals was 138. Last year it was 2,383.

What did all this mean? Did it matter that so many of the kids referred were autistic? Did it matter that the place that referred the most kids to GIDS was Blackpool, where more kids are in care than in any other local authority in the country? Is this trans rights stuff a medical issue? A cultural issue? A political issue?

Curtis probes these questions carefully. She's interesting and smart about the ways the warring sides in the trans debate are closer than they realise. Both recognise that social factors are fuelling the numbers of kids requesting puberty blockers. But for some that's "social contagion" while for others it's "inspiration".

You do often feel, though, that the demands of journalistic clarity are pushing up against complicated anxieties about language. At one point Curtis talks to a woman called Sandra who refers to her trans son as her daughter. Curtis worries that this "leaves me with a dilemma". She doesn't "want to misgender anyone… even if they can't hear me". After much agonising Curtis reveals that she has decided to "misgender the child" as it would be "very hard to hear her story" otherwise.

> ‘She wonders whether it is her place to ‘wade into this’

This is all very well meaning, but it's a cumbersome listen. Nobody doubts that Curtis respects trans people and their right to exist. Journalists have to be allowed to speak clearly. Asking questions isn't offensive.

OK, enough trans rights for a bit. Let's talk about something fun. What about Concorde? A good new podcast on this subject, **Making an Impossible Airplane**, is the latest project of Nastaran Tavakoli-Far, who you may remember as the host of the BBC's hit podcast *The Orgasm Cult*. Are planes as exciting as orgasms? Depends on your time of life, I suppose. Although Tavakoli-Far makes a persuasive case for "the most beautiful airliner that ever flew".

Concorde is a plane that still seems futuristic to us, but it was designed in the 1960s in an atmosphere of "pinstripe suits", "cigarettes" and "cups of tea". The atmosphere is charmingly retro-futuristic. Tavakoli-Far, who is known for her curiously compelling voice (she sounds like a posh-voiced robot but in a good way), is the perfect narrator for this tale of glamour and futuristic travel.

podcasts

The Tavistock: Inside the Gender Clinic
★★★☆☆

Making an Impossible Airplane
★★★★☆

FACUNDO ARRIZABALAGA/EPA



Keira Bell at the High Court in 2020. Bell brought a case against the Tavistock after taking puberty blockers at 16



Making an Impossible Airplane tells the story of Concorde, "the most beautiful airliner that ever flew"

Free books of the month

This month, you can read Agatha Christie's *The Witness for the Prosecution: And Other Stories*, *The Marlow Murder Club* by Robert Thorogood and *Judas 62* by Charles Cumming.



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ALAMY



A scene from Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, 2001

Harry Potter sends me to sleep (and I love it)

Stephen Fry is Gen Z's Mogadon, says Susie Goldsbrough

If you know any bookish twentysomethings with nostalgic tendencies, chances are they've been sleeping with Stephen Fry. No, no, calm down, it's not what you think. I'm referring, of course, to the Harry Potter audiobooks.

The complete, unabridged Harry Potter series, narrated in English by Fry, was launched on Amazon's audiobook platform, Audible, seven years ago. In late November, it passed one billion hours of listening. Or to put it another way: since 2015, fans around the world have spent about a collective 1.14 million years listening to the adventures of Harry Potter and his wizarding pals (and that's only on Audible — Fry recorded the first Potter audiobook in the late Nineties).

> I'm dreaming of pumpkin juice and vanishing charms

You might wonder how on earth people find the time. Well, that's where my generation and our digitally driven insomnia come in. Forget CBD oil or meditation apps; however iPhone-addled our brains, there is one sure-fire way we can get to sleep and it comes in the form of a plummy-voiced, middle-aged actor reading seven children's fantasy stories. Don't judge.

So what wizardry makes these books so soporific? Well, there's the nostalgia factor of course. We're the generation that grew up swallowing the Potter books whole (the first one, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, came out in 1997, the year before I was born) and there's great comfort in revisiting them. Then there's Fry's delivery: languid, melodious and gamely committed to individual character voices (although one friend was anxious to point out that some purists take issue with his iconoclastic pronunciation of certain spells).

Our total familiarity with the plots is key: you know, broadly, what's going to happen, so your consciousness is happy to gently detach. But the real magic, to my mind, lies in what is less familiar: the richness and specificity of the world JK Rowling created. We all remember that wizards have owls — but what about the other pets spotted in the magical creatures shop in book three (*Prisoner of Azkaban*): the fat white rabbit that transforms itself into a silk top hat with a gentle pop, the gigantic tortoise with its jewel-encrusted shell? There's a particular pleasure in surfacing from a doze to catch such vivid, ingenious details.



Susie Goldsbrough

The cult of the HP audiobook has not proved entirely unproblematic given some of the other nocturnal activities popular with youngsters.

A fellow Gen Zer at The Times told me recently about a friend of hers who, bringing a man back to her flat, had to reluctantly admit to her nightly Potter indulgence. "Oh it's fine," he replied, booting up Audible. "I do it too."

"Many, many, many an eyebrow [has been] raised by guests," confirms a male friend. He has finally broken the nightly habit of listening after complaints from his now ex-girlfriend. Their break-up, he assures me, had nothing to do with Stephen Fry.

But I'm not so sure. I was never a diehard listener but after a week of immersion, I'm sleeping better than I have in years, dreaming of pumpkin juice and vanishing charms and crystal balls.

And if my boyfriend doesn't like it? He can expelliarmus! out the door.

C is for Christmas, charity ... and cancer

In the battle for this year's Christmas single top spot, there are the classic contenders such as Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas Is You* and Wham!'s *Last Christmas*. Then there are charity singles: *Food Aid* from LadBaby and now *This Christmas Time*, a song whose proceeds will go to the Cancer Awareness Trust. What makes that track stand out from the others is that the artists involved in the project all have a connection to cancer.

> I noticed similarities between these soldiers' words and those of cancer patients

The Duran Duran guitarist Andy Taylor, who revealed last month that he has incurable stage four metastatic prostate cancer, features on the track, as does Pink Floyd's drummer Nick Mason, who lost his sister to cancer last year. Noddy Holder of Slade contributes alongside the actress Samantha Womack, recently given the all-clear after being diagnosed with breast cancer five months ago. Ozzy Osbourne introduces the track, his wife, Sharon, having been diagnosed with colon cancer last year.

The single is released by the Evamore Project, launched by the professor and Welsh biotech entrepreneur Sir Chris Evans in 2018 after he became fascinated with the letters that First World War soldiers wrote home. He delved into museum archives and decided to put the soldiers' words to music.



Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason and Sir Chris Evans, the Evamore Project founder, with Nina Lopes, an ambassador for the Cancer Awareness Trust

"I noticed the similarities between these soldiers' words and cancer patients," he says. "They use the same language."

This Christmas Time is inspired by the truce between British and German soldiers in 1914. The single begins with a narration from Osbourne, who reads the words of soldiers who took part in the truce. The lyrics are taken from the words of more than 20 soldiers also present that Christmas Day.

Proceeds from the single will be donated to the Cancer Platform, a new branch of the trust that will make all cancer-related information easily accessible. Evans's company Ellipses Pharma, founded in 2017, specialises in the development of new cancer drugs. Advice on how to manage cancer will be available on the new platform next autumn. That's also when Evamore plans to release its album.

Mason has been working with Evamore for years. Womack is supporting the lead singer Casi Wyn with backing vocals on *This Christmas Time*. Taylor's involvement was from a distance, recording his contribution at his home studio in Ibiza. "As a recipient of the Big C hopefully we can prick a tad of awareness towards the incredible work of the Evamore Project," he says.

Yasmin Choudhury

***This Christmas Time* is available to download and stream now**

FIRST NIGHT

the best critics on the top shows of the week

classical

LSO/Rattle

Barbican

★★★★☆

Here was something both old and new. Stravinsky, according to Simon Rattle, "is one of the greatest composers of whose outputs we usually only hear a small part". So the conductor has put together this *Stravinsky Journey*: 60 minutes of music culled from 15 underplayed works, arranged more or less in chronological order to demonstrate the twists and turns in Stravinsky's long creative life.

Early on, for instance, we encounter the 1908 piece *Fireworks*, which sounds like Rimsky-Korsakov without the tunes but with virtuosic orchestral effects. Later Rattle includes perky, pointed neoclassical works bristling with wit and sly pastiche. Finally we hear some of the dry-as-dust 12-tone pieces that Stravinsky wrote late in life — just to show that he could, I think.

However, Rattle was astute enough, and enough of a showman, to end with the rollicking *Scherzo à la Russe*. He also included the grotesquely funny *Circus Polka for a Young Elephant* and the recently rediscovered *Chant funèbre*. They are all pieces that deserve to be played as often as *The Rite of Spring* — but only if you have a band as focused and precise as the London Symphony Orchestra was in this performance. We also heard the mezzo Anna Lapkovskaja bringing bags of personality and a rich timbre to such Stravinsky oddities as the four nonsense songs called *Pribaoutki* and the even weirder *Cat Lullabies* for voice and three clarinets.

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the concert's first half, because the pianist Evgeny Kissin has many devout fans and they clearly loved it. To my ears, however, his playing of Mozart's Piano Concerto in A, K488, was pedantic, ponderous and utterly devoid of wit, delicacy or grace. He was originally down to play Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto, but cried off because illness had apparently prevented him from preparing it properly. Pity he chose to sandbag Mozart instead. His two encores — Mozart again and then Chopin's *Minute Waltz* — were more fun.

Richard Morrison

PAUL COLTAS



Rob Madge as Pat the Cow and Louis Gaunt as Jack Trot. Below right: Dawn French as Dame Trot

Magic beans — and a big dollop of sauce

Dawn French, Julian Clary and a beanstalk of proper girth give Dominic Maxwell plenty to cheer about

theatre

Jack and the Beanstalk

London Palladium

★★★★☆

If Julian Clary didn't take the lead in the all-star Palladium pantomimes, would they still soar in the saucy, self-aware way that they do? We get a chance to find out in the first half hour here as Clary, camp master of ceremonies since Michael Harrison's extravagant spectaculars began in 2016, remains offstage.

Oh, there's no hanging about while we wait. Bangs! Flashes! Gig-volume song and dance from the lithe chorus! Twenty-foot giants! Dawn French having more fun as "juicy old Dame Trot" — the ever fertile mother of Jack (dashing, scissor-kicking, tight-trousered Louis Gaunt) — than she did as a baddie here four years ago! Ace ventriloquism from Paul Zerdin! Louche, self-mocking charm from another Palladium mainstay, Nigel Havers! A cow called Pat (Rob Madge) who belts out punningly renamed tunes — "Knowing Me, Knowing Moo", say — but objects to "problematic and stereotypical cow-shaming" if anyone else tries the same trick! Alexandra Burke looking mean but singing beautifully as the wife of the giant! A semblance of a story!



The excess-all-areas approach can bludgeon as much as it amuses, though. It needs a sprinkling of fairy dust. Cue Clary, in the first of a series of outlandish yet gorgeous costumes (by Hugh Durrant) as the Spirit of the Beans (don't ask), and all is well with this world. He makes fun of everything: the script, French, Havers, the romantic leads, the other dame ("oh look, here's Gary Wilmot in a frock"), members of the audience. All of that, plus his usual lashings of innuendo: the "length and girth" of the beanstalk is the least of it.

Yet he's celebratory rather than cynical. He's game as he speak-sings some tunes — one of them in mid-air — and as he, French and Zerdin engage in a teasing tongue-twisters routine. French, who gets top billing, gives as good as she gets with the badinage.

> **"There is real magic here, not just mockery**

Mark Walters's lunar-themed design is a match for the lustrous costumes. And, once it's all salted with Clary's lofted-eyebrow sense of dubious delight, the comedy keeps clicking. Wilmot sings one of his deliciously dextrous list songs and it's as if music hall never died. Burke brings out her No 1 hit *Hallelujah*, and you wish she could have sung more than an extract.

No time, though. More jokes, costumes, pranks to pack in. Blink and you miss the story being resolved. The sense of peril here is more about whether the principals will pull off their variety set pieces than whether love will conquer all.

Now and then the quality control slips: a crummy routine between Wilmot and French made up of suggestive song extracts, say. More often there is magic, not just mockery — best of all when Jack climbs the genuinely giant beanstalk that rises up from the stalls to the roof of the theatre. Such length. Such girth. Such pleasure.

To Jan 15, palladiumpantomime.com

pop

Sister Sledge

Roundhouse, NW1

★★★★☆

The mood was more Pride carnival than Christmas party at Sister Sledge's festive London show. Instead of pantomime dames, the stage was crowded with gyrating drag queens in buttock-baring outfits as the DJ support act Horse Meat Disco prepared the Roundhouse for the arrival of the ageless disco legends, soul-pop royalty in shimmering blue sequins.

Musically active for more than half a century, Sister Sledge have proved remarkably resilient, outlasting their late-1970s disco-era peak long enough to enjoy the fruits of multiple revivals and rediscovery by younger fans. They even survived the death of the co-founder Joni Sledge in 2017. Still remarkably lithe and youthful at 68, Debbie Sledge may now be the sole remaining full-time member from the original four Philadelphia siblings, but the expanded Roundhouse line-up included her daughter Camille, her son David and Joni's son Thaddeus. They are family.

This show bordered on creaky, cheesy cabaret at times. But armed with some of the most indestructible dance-pop anthems ever, most written and arranged by Chic's Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, Sister Sledge could hardly go wrong. *He's the Greatest Dancer* became a rowdy interactive audience dance-off, a cover version of Chic's own sublime *Good Times* incorporated part of the rap section from the Sugarhill Gang's *Rapper's Delight* and the immortal *Lost in Music* was extended into a sprawling finale that threatened to drag on until January. Which, in fairness, would have been fine with me.



Debbie Sledge, Tanya Tiet and Camille Sledge of Sister Sledge

Behind the slick arrangements and syrupy smiles there were pleasing flashes of soul music's gritty emotional underside. *Got to Love Somebody* had a forceful, punchy, testifying vocal, while *Free*, the sole new composition in this set, was a knowingly retro exercise in emancipatory funk-pop.

Diverting from their well-worn greatest-hits format, the devoutly religious Sledges saluted the season with an R&B reworking of *Silent Night* that segued into an a cappella gospel hymn. This could have been toe-curling but it ultimately proved a heartfelt and quietly moving addition to an evening that spanned the full spectrum from sacred to profane.

Stephen Dalton

classical

Christmas Oratorio

St Martin-in-the-Fields, WC2

★★★★★

Trumpets, drums and an exulting chorus start off the six interlocked cantatas of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. Everybody except King Herod adores baby Jesus, snug in the manger. Woodwinds chortle. Trumpets and drums return at the end, prompting new glory. The world has its saviour and redeemer.

Even if religious beliefs are put to one side, a performance of Bach's creation should always be a tonic. It certainly was in the first instalment of John Eliot Gardiner's two-part account with his Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists at St Martin-in-the-Fields. Key qualities immediately leapt out in the opening chorus, *Jauchzet, frohlocket*: Gardiner's crisp, turbocharged rhythms; and the blaze of the Monteverdi Choir, singing out with heart and soul, addressing the audience directly.

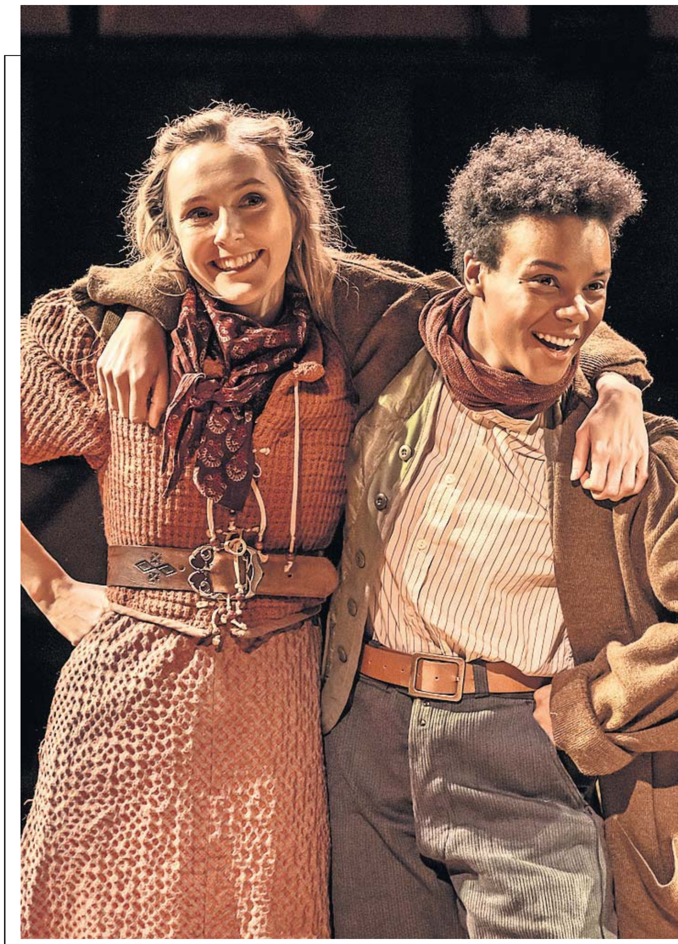
The tenor Nick Pritchard as the Evangelist took the same approach in his recitatives. How could we not listen with bated breath as Bach's Christmas narrative unfolded? Individual soloists, vocal and instrumental, brought their own pleasures. Those featuring the fast-rising countertenor Hugh Cutting were especially expressive. Meanwhile, the pleasures of Jonathan Hanley's tenor urging shepherds to pay Jesus a visit were easily matched by the delights of Rachel Beckett's solo flute and the rippling plucked notes from Kinga Gaborjani's cello. Elsewhere, Kati Debretzeni's darkly soulful violin proved the perfect frame for the third cantata's moving aria, *Schliesse, mein Herze*.

In every respect, though, this was a group triumph, with all participants following Gardiner's judicious lead, always balancing jubilant force with hushed awe in a work remarkable for Bach's skill in repurposing previous secular material. A triumph for the venue too: it's hard to see how the intimate power of this performance could have been matched by the troupe's two previous appearances in the splendour of La Scala, Milan, and Versailles' Chapelle Royale.

Geoff Brown

On demand from Dec 17 to Jan 6, stage-plus.com

JOHAN PERSSON



Rose Ayling-Ellis as Celia and Leah Harvey as Rosalind

A forest that truly enchants

Clive Davis enjoys crisp verse in this richly atmospheric Shakespeare staging

theatre

As You Like It

@sohoplace, W1

★★★★☆

The Forest of Arden seemed even more inviting on a night when the West End was doing a decent impersonation of icy Alaska. Josie Rourke's enchanting production, a shimmering blend of the playful and the cerebral, drew us inexorably into a fantasy realm. Withered leaves fell from the ceiling; Martha Plimpton's ultra-melancholy Jaques got an extra helping all to herself at one point. And at the centre of it all, the pianist and composer Michael Bruce functioned as practically an extra character, supplying cues and in-jokes as the cast pranced around him. At times his underscoring had all the pertness and humour of a silent film soundtrack.

Rourke, in her first directorial outing since the onset of the pandemic, drew startlingly sharp performances from her cast, particularly Rose Ayling-Ellis, who made a confident transition from winning *Strictly Come Dancing* to playing Rosalind's confidante, Celia.

Using a combination of British Sign Language and other variants, Ayling-Ellis immediately established a rapport with Leah Harvey's feisty heroine. Occasionally she vocalised too. Surtitles displayed on four sides of the gallery helped the audience keep track of the dialogue. This was the first original venture at Nica Burns's splendid new in-the-round venue.

It's a richly atmospheric setting for Shakespeare, generating the degree of intimacy that the Globe, with its relentlessly arch approach, seldom achieves nowadays, alas.

The verse-speaking here was as crisp as the chill weather. Alfred Enoch made a winning Orlando, proving his mettle early on in the wrestling match and then letting us glimpse the man-boy lurking beneath the swagger. Harvey was, if anything, even more impressive: this was a maiden who could fend for herself both at court and in the woodlands.

Robert Jones's evocative but unostentatious set design gave us little beyond an ornate parquet floor in the opening scenes. Later, a lattice-work of tree branches appeared high overhead. Howard Harrison's ghostly lighting was extraordinarily effective, while the costumes created by Rob Jones and Poppy Hall evoked both the splendour of the Elizabethan court and the workaday dress of the labouring masses.

Did the fey romantic entanglements begin to pall in the course of about two and three quarter hours? Yes, just a little. But the incidental details still held your attention. June Watson won our sympathy as both Corin and the aged Adam, Tom Mison's clown, Touchstone, provided a constant source of mischief, while Tom Edden, doubling as Duke Frederick and Duke Senior, was the embodiment of nobility. As Amiens, Allie Daniel's singing voice stirred the soul. Meanwhile, Plimpton stole here and there, a hypnotic, world-weary presence.

To Jan 28, sohoplace.org. This review ran in some editions yesterday

theatre

Hakawatis

Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, SE1

★★☆☆☆

Despite some remarkable recent films about Arab women, Scheherazade remains the cultural figure who burns brightest in western imaginations. The playwright Hannah Khalil has taken her story and has devised a mischievous alternative, in which brides waiting to replace her smuggle her stories to help to hypnotise the murderous king.

This intimate theatre lends itself well to traditional storytelling, yet *Hakawatis* struggles to take off. It's a wonderful idea to reconfigure *One Thousand and One Nights* from the point of view of women providing creative back-up for Scheherazade, but the shifts in tone — between mythological whimsy, fear and eroticism — are often jarringly awkward.

True, there are some entertainingly eye-popping moments — not least a djinn who promises a blow job and a story about a puppy that will make you unable to look at Andrex loo rolls in the same way ever again. Yet the framing device, in which the naive young Fatah arrives excitedly for her wedding to King Shahryar, only to realise she's on a marital death row with four other brides, feels too reductive and two-dimensional.

Of course it's tricky to give myth the right emotional heft and it's clear that Khalil — herself half-Palestinian, half-Irish — has set out to show off the liveliness, wit and irreverence of Arab women she knows. Yet in a world where, for instance, "honour killings" remain a huge problem, it would strengthen the production to get a genuine sense of the fear hanging over women who think they must die to satisfy tyrannical convention. That in turn would add potency to the escapism.

There are a few moments of real bite in Pooja Ghai's production. When Zuya the warrior (gutsily played by Laura Hanna) tells the tale of a bombastic sparrow trapped by its ambition, she reveals it's the story told to her by her mother when she asked for an education. It's at such points that the production really flares into three dimensions. That aside, it's a case of a lot of djinn but not enough tonic.

Rachel Halliburton

To Jan 14, shakespearesglobe.com

theatre

Sons of the Prophet

Hampstead Theatre, NW3

★★★★☆

Timing is everything. And so, days after Hampstead Theatre loses its artistic director, having lost first its Arts Council subsidy and then — apparently — its focus on new writing, it comes up with this tremendous new tragicomedy by the American writer Stephen Karam.

OK, "new" as in new to this country: *Sons of the Prophet* first appeared in 2011. It predates Karam's Broadway hit *The Humans*, which played here in 2018 before he directed a film version. And, for that matter, a follow-up statement from the theatre this week suggests that it's aiming to fund a focus on new and contemporary work rather than an abrupt about-turn.

Meanwhile, a show that, never mind the BlackBerries wielded by its mid-2000s protagonists, is a timeless delight. Yet it takes a few minutes to tune into Bijan Sheibani's poised, plausible production. Is it being satirical or sympathetic? There's certainly a lot of information to process as it introduces our 29-year-old Lebanese-American hero, Joseph (Irfan Shamji). He fends off intrusive inquiries about his health and his ancestry alike from his pained New Yorker boss, a one-woman faux-pas factory called Gloria (Juliet Cowan) who has moved here to rural Pennsylvania after her husband's suicide.



It's wry stuff, suffused with a sense of grief and grievance. The sardonic Joseph has lost his athletics career to injury. Then he and his half-deaf younger brother, Charles (Eric Sirakian, *above right, with Shamji*), lose their father after an absurd road accident. Meanwhile their ailing uncle Bill (Raad Rawi) is losing his patience with a culture of oversharing.

The high-school football star Vin (Raphael Akuwudike) is sorry for the prank that injured their father, yet is desperate not to lose his sports career. His two apology speeches are mini-masterpieces of "will this do?" And yet, while Karam packs his characters with foibles, he isn't cynical. Nobody is a villain, everyone wants something from another character — not least Timothy (Jack Holden), the TV news reporter who clicks romantically with Joseph but wants his story — yet somehow they all tear little chunks out of everyone else too. You know, like life.

Heavens, this is good writing, beautifully realised. "At the risk of stating the obvious, all the characters are equally human," Karam writes in the text. Yes, he adds, even the ones who say stupid things. The sense of grief is palpable, yet so too is the sense of making do and getting on.

Samal Blak's artfully spare two-level set uses a minimum of scenery against its black backdrop to make the settings instantly evocative. The acting is terrific. True to the playwright's request, nobody caricatures, everyone hits the seriocomic sweet spot.

Caustically funny, richly human, *Sons of the Prophet* somehow feels familiar and not quite like anything you've seen before. More, please, from its author and from this theatre.

Dominic Maxwell

To Jan 14, hampsteadtheatre.com

first night

pop

Louis Tomlinson
O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, W12
★★★★☆

Seven years since One Direction split, only one ex-member can still claim superstar status. Yet it wasn't Harry Styles whom fans camped out for overnight in sub-zero temperatures this week. It was Louis Tomlinson, until recently the least successful of the former famous five.

Slow to settle on a solo sound, the Yorkshire-born 30-year-old aped his idols Oasis and Arctic Monkeys on his widely derided debut album *Walls* in 2020. He did much the same on last month's follow-up, *Faith in the Future*, yet something had changed. That one went to No 1.

Live, Tomlinson could still be finding his feet. His *Walls* world tour was cancelled because of Covid, and even this show arrived a month late after the singer broke his arm. Initially, he did little other than hang Liam Gallagher-like on the mike stand, a slight figure in what could have passed for workout gear, and sprinkle swear words among his basic banter.

His almost exclusively female fans, on the other hand, were up for a party, and perhaps the loudest singalongs Shepherd's Bush has heard all year. The surprise was how strong the songs sounded.

Backed by a five-piece rock band, Tomlinson more than held his own despite his not notably distinctive vocals. His opener *The Greatest* was clearly indebted to Oasis, but its bolshiness and catchy chorus meant it didn't matter. Even the poppier *Kill My Mind* had swagger, while *Written All Over Your Face* had a sleazy funk undercurrent that brought to mind Black Grape.

By mid-show Tomlinson had taken to prowling the stage, handing huge chunks of songs over to chanting fans and, occasionally, looking as if he might crowd surf. He didn't, but the more confident he grew, the more electric the atmosphere.

Copy of a Copy of a Copy, officially an unreleased song, was a rocky monster that could give Tomlinson his first solo hit single. *Walls*, performed as an acoustic ditty, was greeted like *Wonderwall*. The only One Direction song on the set list, *Night Changes*, sounded tame by comparison. Tomlinson may lack the inventiveness and sex appeal of Styles, but for simple singalongs, he's now 1D's go-to guy.

Lisa Verrico



CLIVE BARDA

Natalya Romaniw and Freddie De Tommaso are the first British pair to lead Tosca at Covent Garden since 1954

Italians don't do it better

Two British stars have taken the lead roles — and it's a triumph, says Neil Fisher

opera

Tosca
Royal Opera House
★★★★☆

It felt like a classic night at Covent Garden, or, as Cavaradossi puts it, "When the stars were brightly shining." With Natalya Romaniw's house debut as Tosca, the Royal Opera House has fielded the first British (and Welsh) singer in the role since Gwyneth Jones in the 1980s. And in casting her against Kent's own Freddie De Tommaso, we have the first British Tosca and Cavaradossi pairing at this address since 1954.

Romaniw's Tosca is sumptuously sung. She fills out Puccini's lyrical lines with creamy elegance, and when she needs to go up a level she has laser-like power. Full marks too for the Callas-like growls when Romaniw delivers her murderous lines to the dying Scarpia. Romaniw's *Vissi d'arte*, although it started badly, with her drifting away from the orchestra, was stylishly delivered, tapered down to an imploring pianissimo.

True, this Tosca could be a bit more of a diva (the character is an opera singer, after all). Yet Romaniw's youth plays in her favour — her Tosca is more of an innocent caught up in bigger games, and De Tommaso, in turn, plays Cavaradossi as more of a political renegade than a dreamy painter. When the pair are reunited in Act III and Tosca explains their unlikely getaway plan, it has never been clearer that he knows it's futile.

The tenor from Tunbridge Wells jumped into this role last year halfway through the show. Now with it well under his skin, he matches Romaniw for volume but, like her, finds plenty of time for tenderness: in a poised *Recondita armonia* (good interplay with Jeremy White's excellent Sacristan) and, just before the firing squad comes calling, his sweet concern for Tosca's bloodstained hands.

There's still too much windiness in Kent's staging, though it's decently revived by Simon Iorio. The cat-and-mouse game Romaniw plays with her tormentor, Erwin Schrott's Scarpia, needed a firmer directorial hand, but Schrott's odd portrayal of the villainous lech may have something to do with that. This Roman tyrant struts around grinning like the cat that got the carbonara. I'm afraid I rarely felt this Scarpia's danger, nor his creepy allure. Vocally it's hit and miss too.

The show is tied up in a big bow by Daniel Oren, who steers authoritatively around the set pieces. Best of all, he's willing to signpost exactly when we should be applauding — and with two singers on stage who deserve the cheers, you should be happy to oblige.

To Dec 21, roh.org.uk

dance

Snowed In
The Place, WC1
★★★★☆

In an age when too much of young lives is spent glued to a screen, isn't it more important than ever to spark children's imaginations through the magic of the stage? This delightful family show (for ages five and up) sets out to prove that theatre — and especially dance — can captivate children in the kind of live collective adventure that no virtual experience could hope to match.

The adventure here is the story of four friends who are snowed in at the top of a mountain in a wondrous hotel that is open only one day a year — the shortest, naturally. Left on their own without the supervision of adults, the young friends let their imaginations run wild as they explore the Magnificent Hotel, from its kitchens and front desk to the mysterious room zero. They do it all through speech and dance, aided by the power of suggestion and the sprinkling of a little theatrical enchantment.

Choreographed by Tom Roden (one half of the comedy-dance duo New Art Club) and Anna Williams for their company Anatomical, the movement is agile and sprightly, characterful and playful without dumbing down. There are some amusing and inventive high-energy set pieces that reveal the importance of physical imagery in the exercise of the imagination. The generous movement illustrates the various activities the quartet get up to, including skiing, swimming, a pillow fight and — the clear favourite — a fantastic snowball fight that has everyone in the audience on their feet.

The simple stage set features three freestanding panels painted with impressionistic wintry scenes. The music is a hotchpotch, mostly very jolly. The four performers — Lisa Chearles Ming Huey, Annie Kelleher (substituting for an injured colleague), Andy Gardiner and Deepraj Singh — worked hard throughout the course of an hour, always on the go, always upbeat. And another plus for parents and teachers alike — there's just the right amount of audience participation to keep even the most restless Year 3 crowd entertained.

Debra Craine

To Dec 24, theplace.org.uk

theatre

Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol
Queen Elizabeth Hall
★★★☆☆

Much as you'd have to be, well, Scrooge-like not to enjoy Charles Dickens's yuletide perennial, this Christmas there are three big theatrical productions of it in this London postcode alone. And here, never mind the title, this is very much Dolly Does Dickens. It's country music, not carols, while the deprivations of 1840s London are now those of 1936 east Tennessee.

Parton, who writes the songs, and her co-adapters, David H Bell, Paul T Couch and Curt Wollan, tweak the details but retain the sentimental sweep of the original. A growlingly buttoned-up Robert Bathurst comes on looking like Ramsay MacDonald in his big grey 'tache, suit and hat as the miserly local-boy-made-good Ebenezer Scrooge ("Eben" to family). Scott Davis's colourful set smushes together all the locations within the local shop of this mining town, which Scrooge's ruthless old business partner and mentor Jacob Marley unwisely signed over to him. Three ghosts arrive, Tiny Tim wishes us the best, a fine five-piece band lurks stage left wielding violin, guitars, mandolins. The mood of Southern Depression-era deprivation clicks comfortably enough in Alison Pollard's production.

And the songs are Parton in melodic, sensitive, evocative mode. There are big singalongs — *Down Home Country Christmas, Good Time* — and maybe you'd like Pollard, who also choreographs, to be able to let loose on one or two more such upbeat moments. But *Appalachian Snowfall* is a strong theme that you are glad to hear a second time, and the songs do exactly what they advertise themselves as: *Party Time, I'm Dreaming of a Smoky Mountain Christmas, I've Changed.*

It's a convivial show. It only needs a few more astringent or unpredictable moments to balance out some of the sweetness. The gifted cast includes notable turns from George Maguire as Marley and Cratchit, Sarah O'Connor as Eben's sister Fanny and Vicki Lee Taylor as Mrs Cratchit.

Scrooge himself is slightly sidelined. Bathurst has to sing only one song at the end, and if he's no virtuoso, well, fine, that fits for the just-thawed miser. He doesn't register quite as strongly as the supporting characters, though, partly because having another actor (Danny Whitehead) as his younger self renders him onlooker only. So I left remembering the smart innovation of having the Ghost of Christmas Future represented by lines on a violin more than I did the belated change of heart by old moneybags himself. Otherwise, this may not be a ravishing reinvention, but it's a very pleasant evening.

Dominic Maxwell

To Jan 8, southbankcentre.co.uk



George Maguire as Cratchit with Samuel Sturge as Tiny Tim

Skip the first half — here come the grenades

Carol Midgley
TV review



Harry & Meghan (episodes 4-6)
Netflix
★★★☆☆

If you have yet to embark on the six-hour marathon *Harry & Meghan*, here's my advice having wearily stayed the course. Ditch the first four hours (boring!) and just watch the last two. If you don't want to waste time watching two wealthy adults frame their lives like a fairytale in the style of a soppy Tui advert, do yourself a favour and fast-forward.

Because while there are not massive "bombshells" in episodes five and six, there are well-aimed grenades. Harry believes that Meghan's miscarriage was caused by the stress of her legal battle with Associated Newspapers over the copyright of her letter to her estranged father. "I believe that my wife suffered a miscarriage because of what the Mail did," he said.

At a royal family summit at Sandringham to discuss Harry and Meghan withdrawing from the UK, it all kicked off like a row in Wetherspoons. "It was terrifying to have my brother scream and shout at me and my father say things that simply weren't true and my grandmother quietly sit there and take it all in," he said. William was also jealous that Harry and Meghan were "stealing the limelight", apparently. So William is an ego-driven bully and Charles is a liar? Woah. At least, having reportedly spent a mind-boggling $100 million on this vanity project, Netflix is glimpsing a little value for money, unedifying as it is.

Because when Harry and Meghan aren't preening and whingeing they give a persuasive account of how they felt attacked and bullied by sections of the media and certain Palace aides. There was indeed a period of time when, for the Mail, Meghan couldn't seem to do anything right. It was sobering to see Meghan's mother become distressed after Meghan said she felt so overwhelmed by the constant attacks she wanted to take her own life, which is horrendous.

Yet there is still a contradiction at the heart of it all. Here they are explaining, for instance, why they wouldn't serve up their child for a royal photo op, while serving up their children in intimate home videos.

They make a good point that the royal family lost a huge opportunity to show how it has evolved by having a mixed-heritage person at the heart of it. That's true. But this documentary is so one-sided, it's hard to know definitively why it couldn't work. When celebrities make films about themselves there is usually an attempt to address hard questions or allegations. Meghan, say, did not directly address the bullying allegations made against her by some members of the royal staff. It was merely posited that it was leaked to discredit her over the Oprah interview. Why not say, "I didn't phone people at all hours of the night"? The message seems to be that Meghan is perfect; Harry is perfect. Maybe it's all the therapy, but at times they seem drunk on their own righteousness.

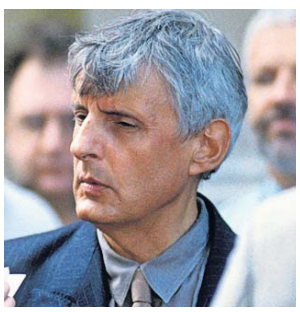
Will this second "volume" help their cause? Certainly more than "Volume I", which was exceptionally tedious. Meghan told of how in her wedding speech she called their romance "a modern fairytale… the love story of a boy and a girl who are meant to be together". If you're thinking that at least it's all over now, I fear you are very much mistaken.

For a full review, see digital editions



The Sussexes discussed their wedding, and much more, in the film

Radio choice
Ben Dowell



Ghost Stories from Theatreland
Radio 4 Extra, 8pm

The acting profession is replete with myths and superstitions and in this delightful programme the actor Jack Shepherd, *above*, explores tales of haunted theatres. They include Theatre Royal Drury Lane where the spirit of the clown Joseph Grimaldi is said to stalk the theatre, shoving actors if they miss their cue. Shepherd also examines the stories of the ghost of the actress Sarah Bernhardt, who is said to haunt the corridors of Theatre Royal Brighton, and the man in 18th-century dress who appeared to a former artistic director of the old Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh.

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Times Radio
Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Anna Cunningham with Early Breakfast **6.00** Chloe Tilley and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Matt Chorley **1.00pm** Ruth Davidson. Covering the big political stories of the week **4.00** Cathy Newman with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Michael Portillo **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** Stories of Our Times **1.30** Red Box **2.00** Highlights from Times Radio

Radio 2
FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show **9.30** Ken Bruce. Martin O'Neill chooses the Tracks of My Years **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Scott Mills **3.30** Scott Mills' Wonder Years **4.00** Sara Cox **7.00** Michelle Visage. A selection of hits from across the pop music genre **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits. Feelgood party classics **9.00** The Good Groove with DJ Spoony. Soulful house and lyrical garage tunes **11.00** The Rock Show with Johnnie Walker **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop **1.00am** Quincy Jones: Forty Thousand Years of Funk **2.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin (r) **3.00** Tracks of My Years (r) **4.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco

Radio 3
FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
Petroc Trelawny presents the classical breakfast show, featuring listener requests
9.00 Essential Classics
Georgia Mann plays the best in classical music with discoveries and surprises rubbing shoulders with familiar favourites
12.00 Composer of the Week: Leokadiya Kashperova (1872-1940)
Donald Macleod explores Kashperova's life and music during the Russian Revolution, including marriage to a revolutionary. Leokadiya Kashperova (*Wirklichkeit — Songs of Love: 12 Romances*, No 7; Cello Sonata in G, Op 1 No 1 — Scherzo: Allegretto vivace; *Dich Einz'gen lieb' ich — Songs of Love: 12 Romances*, No 6 — UK Premiere; *Wiedersehen — Songs of Love: 12 Romances*, No 8 — UK Premiere; Piano Trio in A minor, Op Posth — excerpt; and Symphony in B minor, Op 4 — Finale: Andante sostenuto — molto allegro); and Elizavetta Kashperova (*Laughter Through the Tears*, UK Premiere; Prelude No 2 in D flat — Two Preludes after Konstantin Balmont, UK Premiere)
1.00pm Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert
Nicola Heywood-Thomas with highlights from the 2022 Cowbridge Music Festival performed by Llyr Williams, Elena Urioste, Tom Poster, Rosalind Ventris and Laura van der Heijden. Grieg (*From Early Years*, Op 65 No 1, Lyric Pieces; *Peasant's Song*, Op 65 No 2, Lyric Pieces; and *Wedding-Day at Troldhaugen*, Op 65 No 6, Lyric Pieces); Tchaikovsky (*Dumka*, Op 59); and Mozart (Piano Quartet No 2 in E flat, K493)
2.00 Afternoon Concert
Martyn Brabbins conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra in Richard Strauss's suite Le bourgeois gentilhomme. Presented by Penny Gore. Grace-Evangeline Mason (*Tenebrae factae sunt*); Beethoven (Overture in C *"Name Day"*); Handel (*Endless pleasure*, from *Semele*; and *Và, perfido! Quel cor mi tradirà*, from *Deidamia*); Kareem Roustom (*Ramal*); Mozart (Sonata in E flat, K.282); Strauss (*Le bourgeois gentilhomme*); Beethoven (*Grosse Fuge*); Finzi (*Five Bagatelles*); and Parry (*Blest Pair of Sirens*)
4.30 The Listening Service
Tom Service delves into the music of Benjamin Britten and explores the stories behind some of his festive works (r)
5.00 In Tune
A selection of music, arts news and guests. Including **5.00**, **6.00** News
7.00 In Tune Mixtape
An eclectic non-stop mix of music
7.30 Radio 3 in Concert
The BBC Singers join Principal Guest Conductor Bob Chilcott and narrator Mel Giedroyc for the UK premiere of Benedict Sheehan's *A Christmas Carol*. Retelling the classic Dickens Christmas story, Sheehan's score features original music alongside traditional carols for all the family. Recorded at Milton Court, London
10.00 The Verb
Join Ian McMillan for a festive edition of The Verb with John Hegley, Melvin Burgess, Testament and Bella Hardy
10.45 The Essay: Postcards from the Floating Coast
Bathsheba Demuth journeys to the Yukon River, to see how the history of salmon connects to the present — and shows how even those of us living far away have a relationship with the fish of this great river
11.00 Late Junction
Verity Sharp reflects on the last 12 months in adventurous music with favourite releases from 2022, as picked by presenters, producers and this year's musical guests
1.00am Ultimate Calm (r)
3.00 Through the Night

Radio 4
FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz LW: 198kHz MW: 720 kHz
5.30am News Briefing
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
5.58 Tweet of the Day (r)
6.00 Today
With Nick Robinson and Amol Rajan
8.31 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament
9.00 Desert Island Discs
With guest Cate Blanchett (12/15) (r)
9.45 (LW) Daily Service
9.45 Book of the Week: A Heart That Works
By Rob Delaney (5/5)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Magazine presented by Anita Rani
11.00 The Truth About Jazz
Clive Myrie meets the musician Charles McPherson (2/4) (r)
11.30 Unite
The couple prepare to tie the knot (5/5) (r)
12.01pm (LW) Shipping Forecast
12.04 What Has Media Training Done to Politics?
Shows and recordings from the BBC archives
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Please Protect Abraham
How suitable the current system is for protecting witnesses. Last in the series
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell — Firewall
By James Swallow. Veteran Fourth Echelon agent Sam Fisher and his daughter Sarah are on their way to Morocco to track down an asset. Andonis Anthony stars (3/8)
2.45 Why Do We Do That?
Ella Al-Shamahi looks at how make-up can change the way people perceive faces (8/10)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
Experts answer listeners' queries
3.45 Short Works
Angels on Regent Street, a festive story written by Christine Dwyer Hickey (1)
4.00 Last Word
The lives of famous and less well-known people who have recently died
4.30 Feedback
With Andrea Catherwood (10/11)
5.00 PM
5.54 (LW) Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Dead Ringers (2/3)
7.00 The Archers
Rex faces a terrible dilemma
7.15 Screenshot
Ellen E Jones and Mark Kermode investigate whodunnits (2/9)
8.00 Any Questions?
Topical discussion from Compton Verney, Warwickshire
8.50 A Point of View
A reflection on a topical issue
9.00 Past Forward: A Century of Sound
Omnibus episode. Last in the series (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
News round-up with James Menendez
10.45 Book at Bedtime: A Town Called Solace
By Mary Lawson (5/5)
11.00 Americast
With Anthony Fauci, the man who has served seven US presidents. Last in the series
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: A Heart That Works (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra
Digital only
8.00am Parsley Sidings **8.30** Married **9.00** Act Your Age **9.30** Bleak Expectations **10.00** Julie and the Prince **11.00** Detective **11.30** The Blackburn Files **12.00** The Crossway **12.15pm** A Passage to India **12.30** Romance and Adventure **1.00** Parsley Sidings **1.30** Married **2.00** Act Your Age **2.30** Bleak Expectations **3.00** Julie and the Prince **4.00** Detective **4.30** The Blackburn Files **5.00** The Crossway **5.15** A Passage to India **5.30** Romance and Adventure **6.00** Parsley Sidings **6.30** Married **7.00** Act Your Age. Comedy show with Simon Mayo **7.30** Bleak Expectations. Comedy by Mark Evans **8.00** Ghost Stories from Theatreland. Jack Shepherd goes backstage to unearth tales of haunted theatres. *See Radio Choice* **8.30** Be My Guest. Eamonn Andrews recalls some of the people he has met on radio and in television **9.00** Unreal: A Critical History of Reality TV. How one of TV's most popular shows became mired in controversy **9.50** David Attenborough's Life Stories. The possible existence of the Loch Ness monster **10.00** Comedy Club: The Confessional. With the actor, writer, podcaster, cartoonist and illustrator Jessie Cave **10.30** The Cariad Radio Show. Sketch show **11.00** Penny Dreadfuls: Brothers Faversham. The story of Victorian Britain's most respected detective

Radio 5 Live
MW: 693, 909
5.00am The Big Green Money Show **5.30** Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** Kammy & Ben's Proper Football Podcast **1.30** Kammy & Ben's Proper Football Podcast **2.00** Elis James and John Robins **4.00** 5 Live Drive. With Tony Livesey and Clare McDonnell **7.00** 5 Live Sport: The Friday Football Social. A look ahead to this weekend's Fifa World Cup final **8.30** Match of the Day: Top 10 **9.00** 5 Live Sport. The latest NFL news, analysis and discussions **10.00** Chris Buckler **1.00am** Laura McGhie

talkSPORT
MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Breakfast **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** Drive with Andy Goldstein and Darren Bent **7.00** Kick Off **10.00** Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Martin Kelner

TalkRadio
Digital only
5.00am James Max **6.30** Jeremy Kyle **10.00** The Independent Republic of Mike Graham **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Vanessa Feltz **7.00** Plank of the Week **8.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of **9.00** The Talk **10.00** Tom Newton Dunn **11.00** Live: James Whale **1.00am** Martin Kelner

6 Music
Digital only
5.00am The Remix with Chris Hawkins **5.30** Chris Hawkins **7.30** Lauren Laverne **10.30** Jamz Supernova **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Steve Lamacq **7.00** The People's Party with DJ Paulette **9.00** Tom Ravenscroft **11.00** The Ravers Hour **12.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **1.00am** 6 Music's Emo Forever **2.00** Focus Beats **4.00** Ambient Focus

Virgin Radio
Digital only
6.30am Chris Evans **10.00** Eddy Temple-Morris **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00** Rich Williams **7.00** Ben Jones **10.00** Rich Williams **1.00am** Olivia Jones

Classic FM
FM: 100-102 MHz
6.00am More Music Breakfast **9.00** Alexander Armstrong **12.00** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00pm** John Brunning **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven. Presented by Zeb Soanes **10.00** Smooth Classics **1.00am** Katie Breathwick **4.00** Sam Pittis

television & radio

Viewing Guide
James Jackson

Comedy Classics: Porridge
Channel 5, 9pm

Top pick

"Norman Stanley Fletcher," the judge boomed in voiceover, "you have pleaded guilty to the charges brought by this court …" Clunk, click, went the keys and so we entered HMP Slade. Has any other sitcom had such a bleak title sequence? It's a long way from *Friends*, certainly, yet *Porridge* was also brilliant. It started life as one of seven comedy pilots made with Ronnie Barker in 1973. Only one would be made into a series, and Barker's vote went to one about a Welsh gambling addict. As it was, Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais's *Prisoner and Escort* would be the one selected to become a series — and the rest is history. The witty prison travails ran from 1974 to 1977, and tonight's 90-minute tribute — packed with insight and analysis — looks at why. First and foremost was Barker's peerless comic timing in bringing alive Fletcher's smart line in repartee and mordant observations of prison life. Sharing his wisdom with the new inmate Rudge, he said: "Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to clean the sty — Wordsworth." There was a loveable mischievousness to his attempts to liven up the boredom of imprisonment and win some small victory, most notable over Fulton Mackay's dour officer, Mr Mackay. It was arguably Barker's finest role. We also hear about the loveable Godber (Richard Beckinsale), plus the 1979 film spin-off, the follow-up show *Going Straight*, the American remake *On the Rocks* and the 2017 reboot.

A Storm for Christmas
Netflix

It is December 16, which means we're probably at a point when even the most anti-seasonal curmudgeon can accept that Christmas is upon us. TV is already full of seasonal films, but how about something just a touch different — a Scandi take on heartwarming yuletide cheer. In this new Norwegian mini-series, extreme weather traps travellers and workers at an airport, forcing them to spend the final hours leading up to Christmas together. As destinies collide, there is a bittersweet feel to help this along.

BBC1

Early

6.00am Breakfast **9.15** Morning Live at Christmas. Magazine show **10.00** Expert Witness. How soil examination helped find the man responsible for murdering two schoolgirls. Last in the series (AD) **10.45** A Countryside Winter. New series. Gethin Jones delivers the ultimate guide to a countryside winter (AD) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer. In Cheshire, Nottingham and Norfolk (r) (AD) **12.15pm** Bargain Hunt. From Naseby Antiques Fair (AD) **1.00** BBC News at One; Weather **1.30** BBC Regional News; Weather **1.45** Doctors. Scarlett doesn't know how to make ends meet (AD) **2.15** Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators. Sebastian is faced with his first solo case, but it does not go as planned. *See Viewing Guide* (AD) **3.00** Escape to the Country. A recently retired Essex couple look for a home in Staffordshire (r) (AD) **3.45** The Bidding Room. Items include a room divider, a carved door and two Victorian love hearts (r) **4.30** The Weakest Link. Romesh Ranganathan hosts a sports edition of the quiz (r) **5.15** Pointless Celebrities. A music special of the general knowledge quiz (r) **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather **6.30** BBC Regional News; Weather

7PM

7.00 The One Show Alex Jones hosts live chat and topical reports

7.30 EastEnders Sonia is nervous ahead of the will reading, while Dotty is excited at the thought of selling the house and travelling the world (AD)

8PM

8.00 Granite Harbour As MacMillan and the team grill Shay, Lindo continues to investigate Clellan's death. His work leads to a shocking discovery with potentially fatal consequences. Thriller starring Romario Simpson and Hannah Donaldson. Last in the series (AD)

9PM

9.00 The Traitors The previous night's party games leave the players with more than just a hangover. With one participant already regretting their actions, relationships are tested as accusations fly. Claudia Winkleman hosts the tension-filled reality game show (9/12) (AD)

10PM

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.40 The Graham Norton Show Tom Hanks discusses playing the grumpiest man in America in *A Man Called Otto*, while Suranne Jones, Naomi Ackie and Richard Osman also join Graham on the sofa. Plus, Rina Sawayama performs

11PM

11.25 Late Night (15, 2019) A talk show host fears slipping ratings mean she is set to lose her long-running series, so hires an inexperienced writer to her staff, mainly on the basis that she is an Indian-American woman with fresh perspective while all remaining writers are white men. Comedy drama with Emma Thompson. *See Viewing Guide*

Late

1.05am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

Early

6.30am Escape to the Country (r) (AD) **7.15** Money for Nothing (r) **8.00** Sign Zone: Trawlermen — Hunting the Catch (r) (AD, SL) **9.00** BBC News **10.00** BBC News **12.15pm** Politics UK **1.00** Meet the Street at Christmas (r) **1.45** Celebrity Eggheads. With Zoe Salmon, Dr Sara Kayat, Shazia Mirza, Iwan Thomas and Mark Jenkins (r) **2.15 FILM: Fixing Up Christmas (PG, TVM, 2021)** Party planner Holly must persuade architect Theo that a festive event will build his business. Festive romance starring Marshall Williams and Stephanie Izsak **3.35 FILM: A Christmas to Savour (PG, TVM, 2021)** An ambitious chef and restaurant owner is reunited with a rival cook from her past. Romantic drama starring Britt Irvin and Zach Roerig **5.00** Flog It! Paul Martin and the team value antiques in Southwell Minster, near Nottingham. Michael Baggott and Mark Stacey try to find the best collectibles inspired by nature (r) **6.00** Richard Osman's House of Games. Kevin Eldon, Sarah Keyworth, Laila Rouass and John Whaite take part **6.30** Strictly: It Takes Two. Rylan and Janette Manrara present a one-hour show ahead of the Grand Final. The last couples standing give backstage gossip. Last in the series

7.30 Celebrity Antiques Road Trip University Challenge veterans Eric Monkman and Bobby Seagull take part, while Angus Ashworth and Phil Serrell offer expert advice as the teams head for the antique shops of Kent

8.30 Gardeners' World Winter Specials Adam Frost shows how to build a rose arch, mulches his beds and plants a blackcurrant to train up a fence. Frances Tophill visits RHS Wisley in Surrey and, Carol Klein immerses herself in a sea of roses at Hanham Court Gardens near Bristol (3/4)

9.30 Motherland Amanda's PTA fundraiser doubles up as her birthday celebration, but it results in a night of drama and revelations (5/5) (r) (AD)

10.00 QI Go tricking and treating with Sandi Toksvig and her guests, Ria Lina, Eshaan Akbar, Jimmy Carr and regular panellist Alan Davies

10.30 Newsnight Analysis of the day's events with Kirsty Wark

11.05 How To with John Wilson The host hopes to finally be able to remember his dreams (5/6) (AD)

11.35 How To with John Wilson Though determined to let fate be his guide, the film-maker's attempt at spontaneity does not go as planned (6/6) (AD)

12.05am The Secret Genius of Modern Life Hannah Fry uncovers secrets behind trainers (r) (AD) **1.05** Sign Zone: Simon Schama's History of Now. The major events that have occurred in the historian's lifetime (r) (AD, SL) **2.05-2.50** Louis Theroux Interviews — Rita Ora. Louis spends time with the pop star (6/6) (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain. A lively mix of news and current affairs, plus health, entertainment and lifestyle features **9.00** Lorraine. Entertainment, current affairs and fashion news, as well as showbiz stories and gossip. Presented by Lorraine Kelly **10.00** This Morning. Daily magazine, featuring a mix of chat, showbusiness news, lifestyle features, topical discussion, health and beauty advice and more. Including Local Weather **12.30pm** Loose Women. Interviews and topical debate from a female perspective **1.30** ITV News; Weather **2.00** Dickinson's Real Deal. David Dickinson lands at Aerospace Bristol, where the team set up the dealers' den beneath the wings of the majestic Concorde (r) (AD) **3.00** Tenable. A team of family and friends attempts to top the Tenable Tower to win a big cash prize. Hosted by Warwick Davis (r) **4.00** Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r) **5.00** The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as four contestants work as a team to take on ruthless quiz genius the Chaser and secure a cash prize (r) **6.00** Regional News; Weather **6.30** ITV News; Weather

7.30 Emmerdale Moira rushes to see Cain at the prison, and David is hopeful. Meanwhile, Marcus attempts to dismiss his own misgivings (AD)

8.00 Coronation Street Daniel drowns his sorrows as Daisy visits the doctor, Billy vows to thwart Summer's surrogacy plan, Simon starts work alongside Jacob, and Max accepts another gift from Griff (AD)

9.00 Gordon, Gino and Fred: Unseen Bits 2 Gordon Ramsay, Gino D'Acampo and Fred Sirieix re-live their epic road trips across Mexico the USA and Morocco, revealing all the funniest unseen bits and bloopers that didn't make it on television, until now (AD)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather

10.30 Regional News

10.45 The NFL Show Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell analyse action from the opening match of week 15 between Seattle Seahawks and San Francisco 49ers. Plus, a look back at the major headlines from week 14 and a preview of the weekend's fixtures

11.45 Heathrow: Britain's Busiest Airport A security officer investigates an oddly shaped object (3/12) (r) (AD)

12.10am Teleshopping 3.00 Happy Birthday Mr Bean. How the sitcom character — who featured in just 14 original episodes — has gone on to become a global superstar with an animated series and two top-grossing feature films (r) (SL) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Tenable Christmas Cracker. Quiz show (r) (SL)

Channel 4

6.05am Countdown. Stephen K Amos is in Dictionary Corner (r) **6.45** Cheers (r) **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) **9.35** Frasier (r) (AD) **11.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Gordon Ramsay heads to Miami, Florida, to help a couple who bought a Danish restaurant eight years ago but started losing money rapidly (r) **12.00** Channel 4 News Summary **12.05pm** Couples Come Dine with Me. Three couples from West Sussex compete for the cash prize of £1,000 (r) **1.05** Jamie's Easy Christmas Countdown. Jamie Oliver offers a stress-free guide to the Christmas dinner (r) (AD) **2.10** Countdown. Colin Murray hosts and Vick Hope is in Dictionary Corner **3.00** Escape to the Château at Christmas. The Strawbridge family prepares to celebrate a family Christmas in France (r) (AD) **4.00** A Place in the Sun. A house-hunt around the seaside town of Puerto Rico on the island of Gran Canaria **5.00** Kirstie's Handmade Christmas. Kirstie Allsopp stages her Christmas hamper competition (AD) **6.00** The Simpsons. Homer tries to smuggle medication into the country (r) (AD) **6.30** Hollyoaks. Ste finds out that Leah has been avoiding school and gives her some advice (r) (AD)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Christmas at Harewood House Documentary following life at the Yorkshire mansion, one of England's finest Treasure Houses which was built in the 1700s by Edwin Lascelles, First Baron of Harewood and landscaped by "Capability" Brown (2/3) (AD)

9.00 Celebrity Gogglebox 2022 Retrospective edition, recalling series highlights from 2022. The famous faces involved include Gyles Brandreth, Joanna Lumley, Tom Allen, Rob Beckett and Mo Gilligan (AD)

10.00 The Last Leg Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker are joined by famous faced guests for a comic review of the significant moments of the past seven days

11.05 The Big Narstie Show: Christmas Special With guests including comedian Thanyia Moore, rapper Headie One, singer Jada Kingdom and entrepreneur Steven Bartlett (6/6)

11.55 Snatch (18, 2000) Guy Ritchie's comedy drama with Jason Statham, Brad Pitt and Benicio Del Toro (AD)

1.40am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA A failing Italian restaurant in Easton, Pennsylvania (r) (SL) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. The dinner-party challenge heads to Edinburgh (r) **4.45** Countdown. With guest Stephen K Amos (r) **5.30** Drawers Off: The Big Naked Painting Challenge (r) **5.55-6.15** Kirstie's Handmade Christmas (r)

Channel 5

6.00am Milkshake! **9.15** Jeremy Vine. The broadcaster and guests discuss the issues of the day with co-host Storm Huntley joining him for phone-ins and reading out viewers' correspondence **12.30pm** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. Colin "Coco" Brown prepares to welcome a family of seven to the B&B, and enlists Sebastian to help him erect a gazebo to shade from the unprecedented hot summer (r) **1.25** 5 News at Lunchtime **1.30 FILM: Under the Christmas Tree (PG, TVM, 2021)** Two women's paths cross when Charlie finds the perfect tree for the Maine governor's holiday celebration right in Alma's backyard. Even though the two initially clash they soon find themselves growing closer and more romantic over the course of the town's Christmas celebrations. Romantic drama starring Elise Bauman and Tattiawna Jones **3.15 FILM: Christmas With the Darlings (PG, TVM, 2020)** A woman helps a charming man look after his orphaned nieces and nephew during the holidays. Drama starring Katrina Law and Carlo Marks **5.00** 5 News at 5 **6.00** Cadbury at Christmas. A look at Fortnum & Mason's new confectionery department. Plus, the history of Christmas chocolate packaging (r) **6.55** 5 News Update

7.00 Susan Calman's Grand Day Out The presenter visits the Peak District in the heart of England, famed for its striking landscapes and rolling hills. There Susan negotiates Segway tracks, rides a tram, and scales the Heights of Abraham in a cable car (4/5) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Nick Knowles' Amazing Railway Adventure New series. The presenter embarks on the railway journey of a lifetime across the extraordinary landscapes of Peru to magical Machu Picchu. *See Viewing Guide*

9.00 Comedy Classics: Porridge A tribute to Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais's prison-based sitcom *Porridge*, examining how the characters in Slade Prison revolved around Fletch, Ronnie Barker's inimitable creation. As well as those laugh-out-loud moments from the three series, there's a look at 1978 spin-off *Going Straight*, *Porridge: The Movie*, US remake *On the Rocks*, and the 2017 reboot starring Kevin Bishop and Ricky Grover. *See Viewing Guide*

10.30 Dick Emery's Comedy Gold Friends and colleagues of funnyman Dick Emery share their stories, screen rare home movies, and reveal the man behind the mask. There is a look at his personal life, including his marriages, and his love/hate relationship with comedy caricatures such as Mandy, whose "Ooh, you are awful," catchphrase was also used as the title for his starring feature in 1972 (r)

12.30am 999: Criminals Caught on Camera The use of CCTV to fight crime (r) **1.00** The LeoVegas Live Casino Show. Interactive gambling **3.00** Rich House, Poor House. Double bill (r) **4.45** The Great Model Railway Challenge. Modellers create miniature masterpieces themed on "The Restless Earth" (r) **5.45-6.00** Pip and Posy (r)

Stories of our times

BRITISH PODCAST AWARDS GOLD 2022

Do private schools need a rethink?

In the last few weeks, the Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has called for private schools in the UK to have their charitable status scrapped, but why?

Listen to the Stories of our times podcast on the Times Radio app or wherever you find your podcasts.

BRITISH PODCAST AWARDS GOLD 2022

television & radio

Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators

BBC1, 2.15pm

Daytime BBC dramas may look ever more passé next to the slick streaming shows available on demand any time. Yet it is their lower-budget simplicity and homegrown feel that make them so pleasurable, especially when dozing off to them on a quiet afternoon. This returning series is one of the more enjoyable ones thanks to its amusing script and the fun its lead pair of Mark Benton and Jo Joyner have as the private detectives. They are back today to investigate a tech startup with malware problems … zzzz …

Nick Knowles' Amazing Railway Adventure

Channel 5, 8pm

Move over Chris Tarrant, Michael Palin et al, there is a new celebrity rail-rider in town, or rather on Channel 5. This series may not be original, but we are promised a "reinvention of Nick Knowles". Well, it's hardly that, but the blokeish presenter is certainly a long way from suburban DIY projects as he tours, first, the scenery of southern Peru — chugging from Lake Titicaca to Cusco before zigzagging up towards Machu Picchu with a pisco sour or two to be sipped along the way. Lucky him.

Fleetwood Mac Night

BBC4, from 9pm

The recent death of Christine McVie offers a renewed reason to watch tonight's line-up of Mac repeats (while on iPlayer you can find the excellent 2019 McVie profile *Fleetwood Mac's Songbird*). First up is the saga of the group told by the band members — blues, madness, affairs, cocaine, squillion-selling soft rock, more cocaine etc. At 10pm is a fantastic 1998 performance with McVie lending her warm tones to *You Make Loving Fun* et al. At 11.45pm is *A Musical History*, with celebrity fans paying tribute to the Mac.

Film Late Night

BBC1, 11.25pm

This riff on the *Working Girl* tale, written by and starring Mindy Kaling and set in the writers' room on a TV talk show, is a joy. Emma Thompson plays Dame Katherine Newbury, an acerbic late-night chat show host whose ratings are plummeting. (15, 2019)

Sky Max

6.00am Stop, Search, Seize (r) **8.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow (r) (AD) **9.00** The Blacklist (r) (AD) **10.00** Road Wars (r) (AD) **11.00** NCIS: New Orleans (r) **1.00pm** Hawaii Five-0 (r) **2.00** S.W.A.T (r) (AD) **3.00** The Blacklist (r) (AD)
4.00 DC's Legends of Tomorrow (r) (AD) **5.00** There's Something About Christmas Movies. Alan Carr hosts the film quiz (r) (AD)
6.00 NCIS: New Orleans. A donor heart theft (r)
7.00 NCIS: New Orleans. A witness dies (r)
8.00 A League of Their Own Christmas Special 2022. Romesh Ranganathan hosts (r)
9.00 An Idiot Abroad 3. Visiting China (r) (AD)
10.00 Never Mind the Buzzcocks Christmas Special. A festive edition with Claire Richards, Tom Allen and Pete Doherty (r)
11.00 Micky Flanagan's Christmas (r) (AD)
12.00 The Russell Howard Hour Christmas Special (r) **12.45am** Road Wars Christmas Special 2019 (r) **1.40** Road Wars (r) **2.35** Street Crime UK (r) **3.05** Hawaii Five-0 (r)
4.00 S.W.A.T (r) (AD) **5.00** Highway Patrol (r)

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Storm City (r) (AD) **7.45** Gomorrah (r) **10.00** True Blood (r) **1.15pm** True Detective (r) (AD) **3.30** Gomorrah (r) **5.45** The Baby (r) (AD)
6.30 I Hate Suzie. Naomi and Suzie attend Hal Holloway's press night (r) (AD)
7.10 I Hate Suzie. Finally coming to terms with her situation, Suzie decides to become the narrator of her own story (8/8) (r) (AD)
7.55 Game of Thrones. Tyrion struggles to find a way to curb Joffrey's excesses, and Daenerys arrives at the walled city of Qarth (r) (AD)
9.00 Game of Thrones. Lord Baelish spots a chance to capitalise on the end of the Baratheons' rivalry (r) (AD)
10.05 Game of Thrones. Qhorin gives Jon a chance to prove himself (r) (AD)
11.10 Game of Thrones. Theon embarks on a hunt as he tries to prove his Ironborn status. Daenerys receives a useful invitation (r) (AD)
12.15am I Know This Much Is True (r) (AD)
1.45 The Wire (r) **2.50** The White Lotus (r)
4.20 In Treatment (r) **5.10** Storm City (r) (AD)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am The Guest Wing (r) (AD) **7.00** Discovering: Tim Robbins (r) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **8.50** Branson (r) **10.00** The Vietnam War (r) **11.10** Women at War: Afghanistan (r)
12.00 Clint Eastwood: A Life in Film (r) **1.40pm** My Icon: Chris Powell (r) (AD) **2.00 FILM: GoldenEra (12, 2022)** Documentary about the 1997 Nintendo 64 video game GoldenEye 007 (AD) **4.00** Discovering: Tim Robbins (r)
5.00 The Directors. Spike Lee (r) (AD)
6.00 The Vietnam War (r)
7.10 Women at War: Afghanistan (r)
8.00 First Ladies (6/6) (r) (AD)
9.00 FILM: Cobain — Montage of Heck (15, 2015) The filmmaker Brett Morgen explores the Nirvana frontman's life
11.30 Edge of the Earth (3/4) (r)
12.40am FILM: I Am Bruce Lee (15, 2011) The life and career of the actor and martial artist, looking at his rise to fame (AD) **2.30** Dan Carter: A Perfect 10 (r) (AD) **4.15** The Directors (r) (AD) **5.05** First Ladies (r) (AD)

Sky Arts

6.00am Charlie Watts Jazz Orchestra **7.15** The South Bank Show Originals **7.45** Darbar Festival 2022 **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Jason Robards **12.00** Film Noir **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2021 (AD) **3.00** Best of Portrait Artist of the Year 2021 (AD) **4.00** Discovering: Richard Dreyfuss **5.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD)
6.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents. A meek man wants to feel a sense of importance
6.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents. A woman's husband threatens murder to prove his love
7.00 Earth, Wind & Fire Experience Feat. Al McKay Play: Avo Session. A 2017 concert
8.40 The Who: Tommy Live at the Royal Albert Hall. The band perform their rock opera
10.10 Joe Cocker: Mad Dogs & Englishmen
12.25am Donovan — Sunshine Superman **3.05** Donovan & the Beatles In India **4.05** Cheltenham Literature Festival **5.05** Simple Minds: Music Icons **5.30** Video Killed the Radio Star

Sky Main Event

6.00am Live Big Bash League: Melbourne Stars v Hobart Hurricanes. Coverage of the T20 match at Melbourne Cricket Ground **8.45** Live Big Bash League: Sydney Thunder v Adelaide Strikers. The T20 match at Sydney Showground Stadium
12.30pm Live World Darts Championship. Coverage of session one on day two at Alexandra Palace in London **4.30** World Cup Report
7.00 Live World Darts Championship. Coverage of session two on day two at Alexandra Palace in London, featuring three first-round matches and one second-round match
8.00 Live EFL: Birmingham City v Reading (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the Championship match, which is to be held at St Andrew's
10.00 Live World Darts Championship. Coverage of session two on day two at Alexandra Palace
11.00 Formula 1. A look back at the 2022 season
12.30am World Cup Report **4.30** Live Test Cricket: Pakistan v England. Day one of the third Test in the three-match series, which takes place at National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi



TalkTV

6.00am James Max. An initial insight into the day's top stories **6.30** Jeremy Kyle. Political panel debates, all the latest from Parliament, and exclusive interviews with famous faces
10.00 The Independent Republic of Mike Graham. The host takes a look at the morning newspapers **1.00pm** Ian Collins. Hard-hitting monologues, stimulating debates and dedicated time for your calls **4.00** Vanessa Feltz. The host guides you through the big stories of the day
7.00 Plank of the Week. Mike Graham presents the ultimate panel show where the guests get to nominate their Plank of the Week
8.00 Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of. The host presents his verdict on the week's global events
9.00 Football, B****y Hell!. Andy Goldstein presents a live football chat show with guests
10.00 First Edition. Taking an energetic look at tomorrow's news, tonight, through the lens of the newspaper first editions
11.00 Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of
12.00 Live: James Whale. The big stories of the day **1.00am** Vanessa Feltz **2.00** Jeremy Kyle Live **3.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of
4.00 Football, B****y Hell! **5.00** Cristo

BBC4

7.00pm Christmas University Challenge. The last two teams standing do battle for the series title. Jeremy Paxman asks the questions
7.30 Top of the Pops. Performances by Meat Loaf, Diana Ross, Haddaway and Take That
8.00 Top of the Pops: Christmas 1993. Tony Dortie and Mark Franklin introduce performances by Take That with Lulu, 2 Unlimited, the Bluebells, Gabrielle and M People
9.00 Fleetwood Mac: Don't Stop. Documentary looking back over the rock band's long career, featuring interviews with Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks (r)
10.00 Fleetwood Mac: The Dance. A 1997 live performance by the band, featuring tracks including *The Chain*, *Dreams* and *Big Love*
11.45 Fleetwood Mac: A Musical History. Fleetwood Mac are the great survivors of British and US rock music. Here, fans including Edith Bowman, KT Tunstall and Toyah Willcox celebrate the group's success
12.45am Country Music by Ken Burns. The brief though eventful era from 1968 to 1972
2.30-3.30 Fleetwood Mac: Don't Stop. *See Viewing Guide* (r)

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: The Invisible Message (PG, 1935) (b/w) **7.10 FILM: Adam and Evelyne (PG, 1949)** (b/w) **9.00 FILM: The Singer Not the Song (PG, 1961)** Western **11.40** R.A.F **12.40pm FILM: The Hornet's Nest (U, 1955)** Crime comedy starring Paul Carpenter (b/w) **1.55 FILM: Nurse Edith Cavell (PG, 1939)** First World War biopic starring Anna Neagle (b/w) **3.55 FILM: Emergency (PG, 1962)** Drama starring Glyn Houston (b/w)
5.10 FILM: Dragonwyck (PG, 1946) Gothic drama starring Gene Tierney (b/w)
7.15 FILM: Nurse on Wheels (U, 1963) Comedy starring Juliet Mills (b/w)
9.00 Cellar Club with Caroline Munro
9.05 FILM: The Other (18, 1972) Thriller starring Uta Hagen and Chris Udvarnoky
11.00 Cellar Club with Caroline Munro
11.05 FILM: Bloodbath at the House of Death (18, 1983) Horror spoof starring Kenny Everett **12.50am** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **12.55 FILM: Hysteria (18, 1997)** Sci-fi thriller **3.00** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **3.05 FILM: How I Won the War (12, 1967)** **5.20** Four Star Theatre (b/w)

Film4

11.00am Kansas Raiders (PG, 1950) Western starring Audie Murphy **12.40pm Ten Tall Men (U, 1951)** Foreign Legion comedy adventure with Burt Lancaster **2.50 Hobson's Choice (U, 1953)** Comedy starring John Mills (b/w) (AD) **5.00 Flight of the Navigator (U, 1986)** Sci-fi adventure starring Joey Cramer
6.55 Uncle Drew (12, 2018) An ageing streetball legend gets his old crew back together for a tournament. Comedy starring Kyrie Irving, Shaquille O'Neal and Lil Rel Howery
9.00 Bloodshot (12, 2020) A resurrected Marine with augmented abilities tries to solve a conspiracy that robbed him of the woman he loved. Sci-fi thriller starring Vin Diesel
11.10 The Oak Room (15, 2020) During a raging snowstorm, a drifter returns home to the blue-collar bar located in the remote Canadian town where he was born. Mystery thriller with RJ Mitte, Ari Millen and Peter Outerbridge
12.55am-4.00 The Square (15, 2017) A Stockholm museum's chief art curator finds himself in times of professional and personal crisis as he attempts to set up a new exhibit. Comedy starring Claes Bang and Elisabeth Moss

More4

8.55am Kirstie's Vintage Gems **9.15** A Place in the Sun **11.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD)
1.10pm Heir Hunters **3.10** Four in a Bed
5.55 Escape to the Château: DIY. Restoring an old stable into a studio for art weekends (AD)
6.55 Escape to the Château. Family members come together to build an open kitchen (AD)
7.55 Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud follows the progress of a teacher and an architect who want to restore and transform a 100-year-old blacksmiths in Co Antrim (5/9) (AD)
9.00 24 Hours in A&E. A man has severed three of his fingers, and a patient with motor neurone disease with severe sepsis (2/7) (AD)
10.00 24 Hours in A&E. A 54-year-old man is rushed to A&E after a head on collision with his car windscreen, leaving doctors concerned he may have sustained a serious life changing injury (5/7) (AD)
11.05 Emergency Helicopter Medics. In Lanchester, heli-medics struggle to free a man trapped in his mangled car (1/10) (AD)
12.10am 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Hosted by Jimmy Carr **2.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.20-3.50** Food Unwrapped (AD)

ITV2

6.00am Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.00** The Cabins **8.00** Love Bites (AD, SL) **10.00** Dress to Impress **12.00** Rolling In It: Christmas Special (AD) **1.00pm** Family Fortunes **2.00** Catchphrase **2.50** One Tree Hill **4.00** Chuck
6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. With Ade Adepitan, Clare Balding and Robert Webb (AD)
7.00 Dress to Impress. Choosing outfits for a singer-songwriter from Liverpool
8.00 Bob's Burgers. Louise, Gene and Tina engage in a heated turf war (AD)
8.30 Bob's Burgers. Linda works a temp job at the post office to make extra money (AD)
9.00 FILM: Horrible Bosses (15, 2011) Three unhappy employees conspire to murder each other's managers. Comedy starring Jason Bateman, Charlie Day, Jason Sudeikis, Kevin Spacey, Jennifer Aniston and Colin Farrell (AD)
11.05 Family Guy. Joe cheats on Bonnie (AD)
11.30 Family Guy. Lois meets an old flame (AD)
12.00 American Dad! (AD) **1.00am** The Stand Up Sketch Show Christmas Special **1.30** The Stand Up Sketch Show **2.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3

6.00am Classic Coronation Street (AD) **7.00** Classic Emmerdale **8.05** Man About the House **9.10** The Darling Buds of May **11.35** Heartbeat (AD) **1.40pm** Classic Emmerdale **2.50** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **3.50** A Touch of Frost. An unsolved crime returns to haunt Frost (AD)
6.00 Heartbeat. Joe helps Dawson when she is accused of theft following a raid (AD)
7.00 Heartbeat. Rivalry between two brass bands gets out of hand and a musician dies (AD)
8.00 Doc Martin. The GP investigates a shooting and a secret bidder buys the pub (5/8) (AD)
9.00 Doc Martin. Martin and Louisa have their first fertility consultation with Dr Emma Ryder. Starring Martin Clunes (6/8) (AD)
10.00 Cracker. Part three of three. David Harvey maintains his innocence (3/7) (AD)
11.05 Cracker. Part one of two. A lonely bachelor Stuart befriends a wayward teenager, and together they embark on a deadly relationship. Meanwhile, Fitz is left holding the baby as Judith rebels (4/7) (AD)
12.15am Ladies of Letters (AD) **2.20** Unwind with ITV **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

6.00am The Champions **6.55** Cadfael **8.25** Magnum, PI (AD) **9.25** The Professionals (AD) **10.30** Minder (AD) **11.40** The Protectors **12.10pm** The Champions **1.10** Cadfael **2.50** Magnum, PI (AD) **3.55** The Professionals (AD)
4.55 Minder. Arthur's niece gets married (AD)
6.00 Giant Lobster Hunters (AD)
7.00 BattleBots. Minotaur goes head-to-head with Subzero, as the two bots try and secure their spots in the World Championship
8.00 Junk and Disorderly. Henry Cole and Allen Millyard find and restore a Triumph Trident bike
9.00 All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite. Hard-hitting action from the world of All Elite Wrestling — the roster features world-class talent including Jon Moxley, Chris Jericho, Bryan Danielson and Claudio Castagnoli
11.05 FILM: Speed 2 — Cruise Control (PG, 1997) A couple on a cruise liner in the Bahamas have to stop the vessel from colliding with an oil tanker. Action thriller sequel with Sandra Bullock, Jason Patric and Willem Dafoe
1.40am Motorsport Mundial **2.05** Auto Mundial **2.30** The Protectors **3.00** Teleshopping

Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.00** As Time Goes By **7.30** All Creatures Great and Small **8.30** New Tricks (AD) **9.50** Classic Casualty **12.00** The Bill **1.00pm** Classic EastEnders **2.15** New Tricks (AD) **4.20** All Creatures Great and Small **5.25** As Time Goes By. Jean and Lionel return from LA
6.00 As Time Goes By. Rocky and Madge's honeymoon ends in disaster.
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine. The trio buys a car so they can get around more easily
8.00 Father Brown. The mayor is electrocuted while speaking at a village fete (AD)
9.00 Father Brown. The priest's priceless Blue Cross is targeted by an infamous criminal (AD)
10.00 New Tricks. The team investigates a hit-and-run. Sally Phillips guests (5/10) (AD)
11.00 Hustle. The gang lures a businessman into buying a useless racehorse, but faces problems when it is revealed he has fixed the contract. Robert Vaughn stars (2/6)
12.20am As Time Goes By **1.35** Auf Wiedersehen, Pet. Oz falls for a Cuban ballerina **2.40** A Place to Call Home **4.00** Teleshopping

Yesterday

6.00am Impossible Engineering (AD) **8.00** Top Gear (AD) **9.00** The World at War **10.00** War Factories **11.00** Great British Railway Journeys **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **1.00pm** Bangers and Cash **2.00** Great British Railway Journeys **4.00** The World at War **5.00** War Factories. Peugeot in Nazi-occupied France
6.00 WW2 — Battles for Europe
7.00 Abandoned Engineering. A secret Japanese facility that was once at the forefront of weapons technology (9/11) (AD)
8.00 Abandoned Engineering. Examining how Europe's most advanced power station became a film set (5/6) (AD)
9.00 Bangers and Cash. A 1970 Excalibur Roadstar, once owned by Roy Orbison, arrives at Thornton-le-Dale (1/8)
10.00 Bangers and Cash. Three MGs from the 70s turn up at the garage, still covered in original factory wax (6/10)
11.00 Abandoned Engineering. A Second World War aviation facility in Farnborough (4/8) (AD)
12.00 Top Gear (AD) **1.00am** Impossible Engineering (AD) **3.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland

As BBC1 except: 7.00pm-7.30 B&B by the Sea. Ellie Simmonds checks into the 19th-century Victorian villa **10.40** The Blame Game. Topical comedy panel show with guest William Thompson **11.10** The Graham Norton Show. With Tom Hanks, Suranne Jones, Richard Osman and Naomi Ackie **12.00** FILM: Late Night (2019) **1.35am-6.00** BBC News

BBC1 Scotland

As BBC1 except: 11.15am-12.15pm Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD) **11.30** The Scotts. Darren stresses about becoming a father (r) **12.00** Sacked in the Morning (r) **12.30am** FILM: Late Night (2019) **2.05** Weather for the Week Ahead **2.10-6.00** BBC News

BBC2 N Ireland

As BBC2 except: 9.30pm-10.00 Frankie Boyle's New World Order. The comedian tries to make sense of the modern world (r)

BBC2 Wales

As BBC2 except: 11.05pm It's My Shout: Short Films from Wales. A woman attempts to lead her team to victory in a competition **11.20** It's My Shout: Short Films from Wales. A pensioner is determined his granddaughters will have a great Christmas **11.35** How To with John Wilson (AD) **12.05am** How To with John Wilson (AD) **12.35-1.05** Coast (r)

ITV1 Wales

As ITV1 except: 7.00pm-7.30 Coast & Country

STV

As ITV1 except: 7.00pm-7.30 What's on Scotland **10.30-10.45** STV News **3.50am-5.05** Night Vision

UTV

As ITV1 except: 7.00pm-7.30 UTV Life

BBC Scotland

7.00pm The Seven **8.00** Christmas Stories (r) (AD) **8.30** For Peat's Sake — Our Lives (r) **9.00** Doddie Weir: One More Try (r) **10.00** Still Game (r) (AD) **10.30** Sacked in the Morning (r) **11.00** Best of Only an Excuse? (r) **11.30-12.00** Pity Party (r)

BBC Alba

6.00am Alba Today **5.00pm** Treubh an Tuathanais (Big Barn Farm) (r) **5.15** Pip & Posy (r) **5.25** Sionnach agus Maigheach (Fox & Hare) (r) **5.35** Òrain Nollaig (r) **5.45** AH-AH/No-No (r) **5.50** Peataichean/Pets (r) **5.55** Stòiridh (r) **6.00** Aithne air Ainmhidhean (All About Animals) (r) **6.20** @12 (r) **6.25** A' Chuil (r) **6.35** Ronia, Nighean a' Mheirlich/Ronja, the Robber's Daughter (r) **7.00** An Là **7.25** Fraochy Bay (r) **7.30** Machair (r) **7.55** Dàn (r) **8.00** Leugh Mi (Book Show) (r) **8.30** Gàrraidhean Mòra na h-Alba (r) **9.00** Beethoven: Aí Chuirm Ghàidhlig (r) **10.25** Borgen (r) **11.25** Blas (r) **12.00-6.00am** Alba Today

S4C

6.00am Cyw: Sali Mali (r) **6.05** Caru Canu a Stori (r) **6.15** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **6.30** Sam Tân (r) **6.40** Loti Borloti (r) **6.55** Nos Da Cyw **7.05** Pablo (r) **7.15** Fferm Fach (r) **7.30** Sion y Chef (r) **7.45** Byd Tad-Cu (r) **8.00** Ty Mêl (r) **8.10** Halibalw (r) **8.20** Y Brodyr Coala (r) **8.30** Gwdihw (r) **8.45** Guto Gwningen (r) **9.00** Ynys Broc Môr Lili (r) **9.10** Cei Bach (r) **9.25** Digbi Draig (r) **9.35** Oli Wyn (r) **9.45** Patrôl Pawennau (r) **10.00** Sali Mali (r) **10.05** Caru Canu a Stori (r) **10.15** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **10.30** Sam Tân (r) **10.40** Loti Borloti (r) **10.55** Nos Da Cyw (r) **11.05** Pablo (r) **11.15** Fferm Fach (r) **11.30** Sion y Chef (r) **11.45** Byd Tad-Cu (r) **12.00** News; Weather **12.05pm** Bwyd Epic Chris (r) (AD) **12.30** Heno (r) **1.00** Dim Byd i'w Wisgo (r) **1.30** Cerys Matthews a'r Goeden Faled (r) **2.00** News; Weather **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** News; Weather **3.05** Teulu'r Castell (r) **4.00** Awr Fawr: Jamborî (r) **4.10** Pablo (r) **4.20** Bach a Mawr (r) **4.35** Nos Da Cyw (r) **4.45** Sbarc (r) **5.00** Stwnsh: Ar Goll yn Oz (r) **5.20** Cic Byw **5.55** Ffeil **6.00** Ceffylau Cymru (r) **6.30** Pobol y Rhondda (r) **6.57** News **7.00** Heno **7.30** News; Weather **8.00** Bwrdd i Dri. The latest table is set in Cardiff **8.25** Only Boys Aloud **8.55** News; Weather **9.00** Mwy o Ryan a Ronnie (r) **10.00** Radio Fa'ma (r) (AD) **11.00-11.35** Hyd y Pwrs (r)

MindGames

Backgammon Chris Bray

Cinderella point

As we are now in pantomime season, it is time for Cinderella to come to the ball. In backgammon the Cinderella point is defined as the point that is seven pips in front of your opponent's anchor, be that a single anchor or the frontmost of two anchors in a back game. So, if your opponent holds your 2-pt, the Cinderella point is your 9-pt.

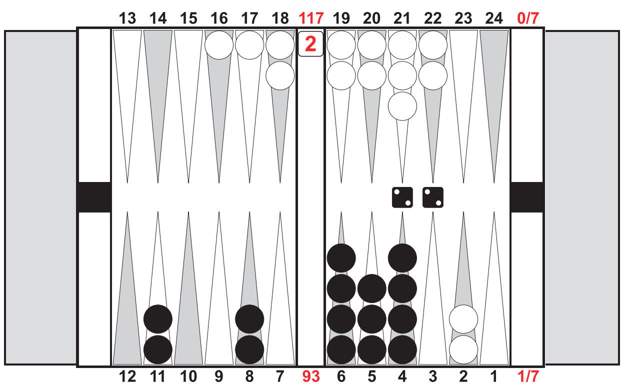
Why is it important? We have seen in an earlier article that as you bear your checkers into your home board, points that were assets become liabilities which need to be cleared rather than kept. The easiest point to clear is one that is just out of direct range of your opponent and that is the one that is seven pips away. If you fail to clear the point safely and bear in a single checker then at worst you are going to leave your opponent six numbers to hit the exposed blot (slightly more if your opponent is playing a back game).

Let's look at this week's position. Black has just rolled double twos and, if he plays without thinking, he will move 11/7(2). This creates an unnecessary liability. If his next roll is 65 or 64, he will immediately leave a direct shot. Clearing his 8-pt and 7-pt will be fraught with danger, and he could well end up leaving White a double shot.

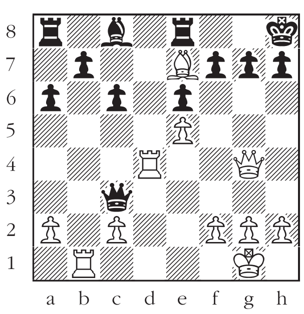
Now look at the alternative 11/9(2), 8/6(2). At one stroke Black makes the Cinderella point and clears his 8-pt. An old backgammon adage says that a point cleared is a point not to be feared. Now Black has only one point left outside his home board, and any combination of threes, fours and fives next turn (plus double twos and double sixes) will safely clear his 9-pt.

The term Cinderella point was coined by the US player Mike Corbett in his quirky but excellent book *Backgammon Problems.* It is an easy term to remember, and I have used the concept countless times to help me bear in my checkers much more safely than I used to do before I read Mike's book.

So, do remember to let Cinders come to the ball.



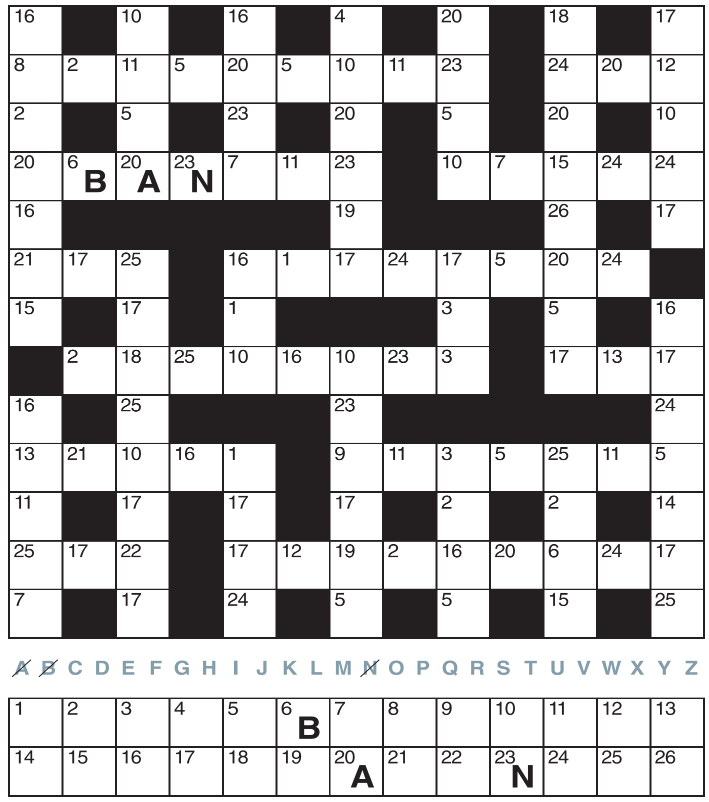
Winning Move



White to play.
This position is from Swiercz-Shuvalova, chess.com 2022.

A famous opening, favoured by chess legends Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov, is known as the "Poisoned Pawn variation". In this line Black loses time in order to grab a pawn with the queen. Although the line is perfectly playable, the concept is a very risky one. Black has tried a similar idea in this game but now gets crushed. Can you see how?

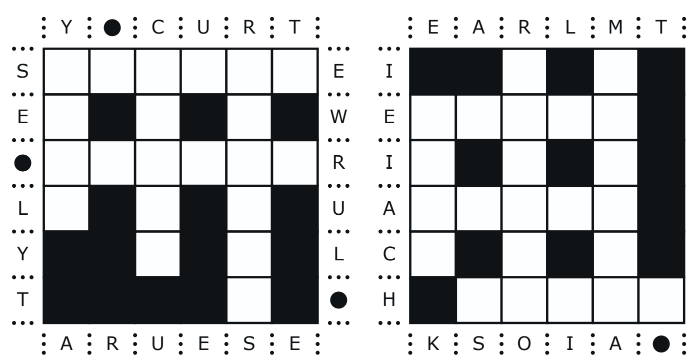
Codeword No 4773



Every letter in this crossword-style grid has been substituted for a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

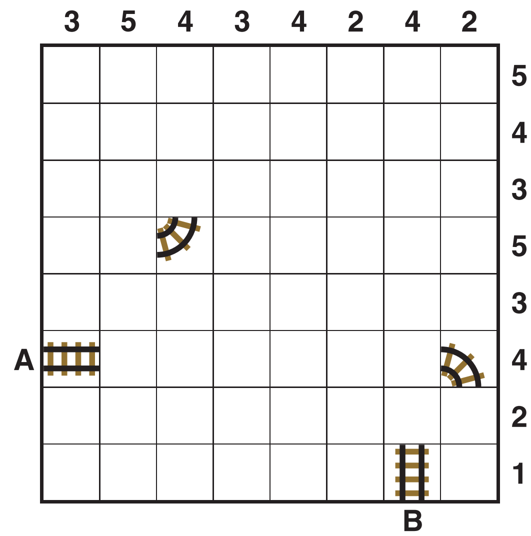
Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica No 6659 No 6660



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

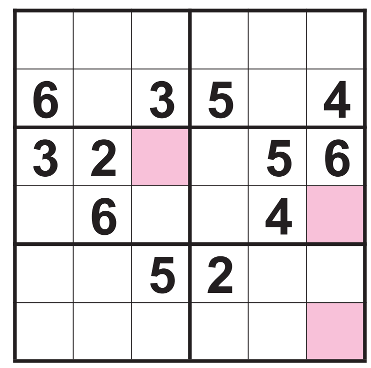
Train Tracks No 1813

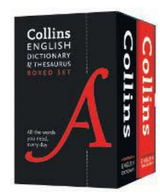


Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.

Win a Dictionary & Thesaurus

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6





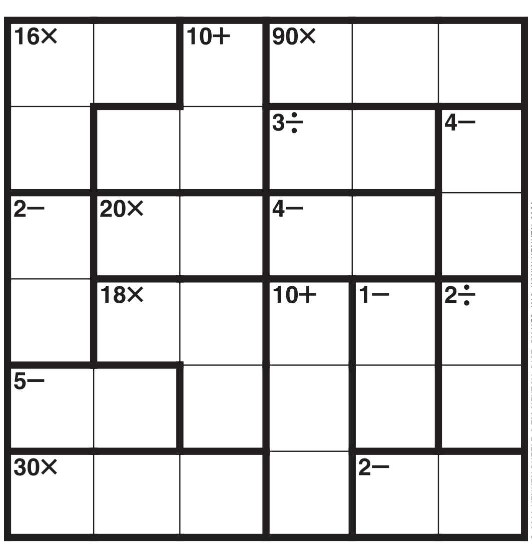
Winners will receive a *Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus*

Solve the puzzle and text in the numbers in the three shaded boxes. Text TIMES followed by a space, then your three numbers, eg, TIMES 123, plus your name, address and postcode to 64343 (UK only), by midnight. Or enter by phone. Call 09012 925274 (ROI 1516 303 501) by midnight. Leave your three answer numbers (in any order) and your contact details.

Calls cost £1 (ROI €1.50) plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. Winners will be picked at random from all correct answers received. One draw per week. Lines close at midnight tonight. If you call or text after this time you will not be entered but will still be charged. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

What are your favourite puzzles in MindGames? Email: puzzles@thetimes.co.uk

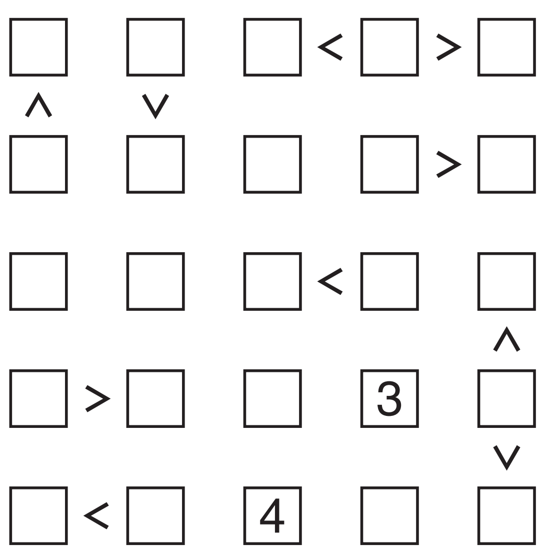
KenKen Difficult No 5765



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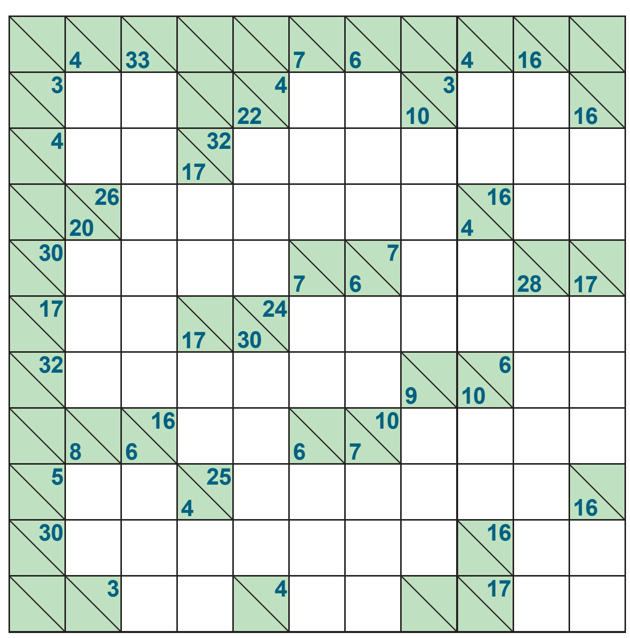
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 4370



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

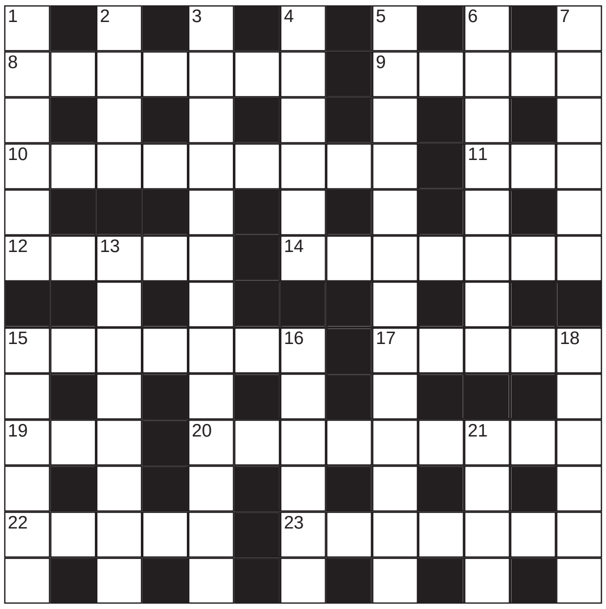
Kakuro No 3329



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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times2 Crossword No 9089



Across

8 Spiral ear cavity (7)
9 Woodland primula (5)
10 Outstanding example (9)
11 Very; in addition (3)
12 Public square (5)
14 Double (7)
15 Stretchy (7)
17 Vitality, enthusiasm (5)
19 Social insect (3)
20 Uncultivated, uncouth (5-4)
22 Single items (5)
23 British royal house (7)

Down

1 Behaves badly (4,2)
2 Reflected sound (4)
3 Tall kind of reed mace (8,5)
4 Father or mother (6)
5 Have little or no result (4,2,7)
6 Raised stage (8)
7 Move data to a larger computer (6)
13 Teaching world (8)
15 Metallic element (6)
16 Captured (6)
18 Craving food (6)
21 Covetousness (4)

Solution to Crossword 9088



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Similar ... but different (65)

With support for partner's overcall, follow this scheme.
0-9 pts: bid to the level of the fit.
10+ pts: bid opener's suit at the lowest level, the unassuming cue bid (UCB).

Deal One
Dealer E

	North	
	♠ K74 ♥ K32 ♦ A743 ♣ 753	
West ♠ 986 ♥ Q1076 ♦ 1062 ♣ Q82		**East** ♠ J10 ♥ J9 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ AJ1096
	♠ AQ532 ♥ A854 ♦ 95 ♣ K4	

S	W	N	E
			1♣
1♠	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
2♥ (2)	Pass	3♠ (3)	Pass
4♠	End		

(1) Unassuming cue bid, showing ten or more points and three or more spades.
(2) Natural-ish game try.
(3) Three prime cards. How much better ♠K and ♥K are than ♣K would be. North would jump all the way to 4♠ with a heart fewer — better for ruffing.

West leads ♣2, partner's suit, East winning ♣A and switching to ♦K. As declarer, you duck (it doesn't matter here, but ducking is best on general severing-defensive-communication principles), and win ♦Q with ♦A.

Your issue is the fourth heart. If you draw trumps, you'll be reliant on a 3-3 heart split. If you don't draw trumps and play ♥AK and a third heart, West will win, whereupon a fourth heart will promote a trump trick. If you draw two rounds of trumps (removing East's) then play ♥AK and a third heart, West will win and play her third spade, killing the ruff. What to do?

The solution is to duck the first heart — without playing any spades. The defence win and play a third diamond. You ruff, play ♠AK, then test hearts, cashing ♥K, leading to ♥A (East discarding) and peacefully ruffing ♥8 with dummy's ♠7. You cross to ♣K, cash ♠Q drawing West's ♠9, and claim ten tricks.

Deal Two
Dealer E

	North	
	♠ K74 ♥ J32 ♦ A743 ♣ 753	
West ♠ 986 ♥ Q1076 ♦ 1062 ♣ Q82		**East** ♠ J10 ♥ K9 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ AJ1096
	♠ AQ532 ♥ A854 ♦ 95 ♣ K4	

S	W	N	E
			1♣
1♠	Pass	2♠ (1)	Pass
Pass(2)	End		

(1) Three-card spade support and fewer than ten points.
(2) The values for game are not present.

Try as she may, declarer cannot make more than eight tricks. West leads ♣2 to ♣A, declarer ducks East's switch to ♦K and beats ♦Q with ♦A. She then leads ♥2 and ducks East's ♥9, East leading ♦J. She ruffs, plays ♠A, leads across to ♠K, returns to ♥A and leads a third heart. However, West wins ♥Q and leads ♠9. Declarer wins ♠Q but must lose ♥8 to ♥10 later. Eight tricks made — good to be no higher than 2♠.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY 24	+ 17	x 2	– 18	3/4 OF IT	– 6	2/3 OF IT	+ 17	20% OF IT	x 2	ANSWER
MEDIUM 118	x 3	+ 48	5/6 OF IT	+ 99	+ 1/2 OF IT	– 79	75% OF IT	– 88	x 3	ANSWER
HARDER 79	x 8	+ 1/4 OF IT	x 3	70% OF IT	+ 894	x 3	– 97	50% OF IT	– 769	ANSWER

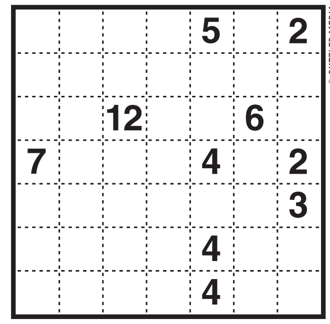
Polygon



From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 12 words, average; 17, good; 24, very good; 32, excellent

Yesterday's answers
deep, deist, depute, **deputise**, desi, despite, diet, dispute, duet, dupe, dust, edit, étude, pied, pseud, seed, side, speed, spud, steed, stud, stupid, suede, suited, tepid, tide, tied, upside, used

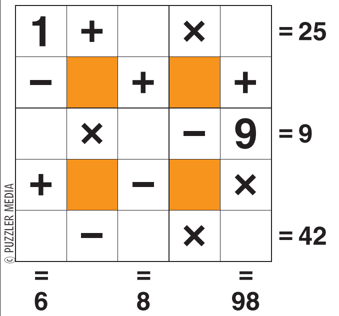
Cell Blocks No 4656



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Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 3332

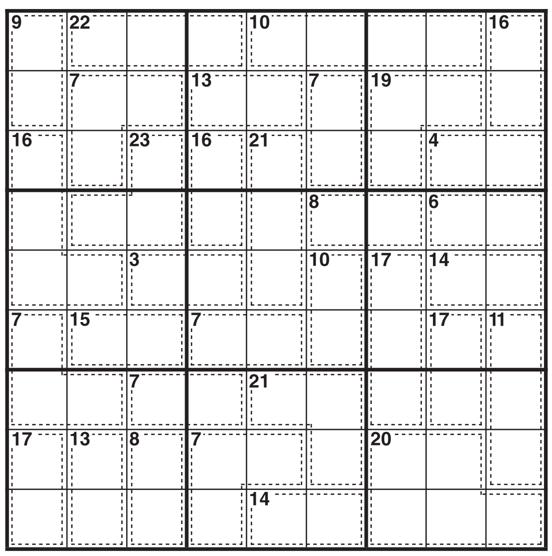


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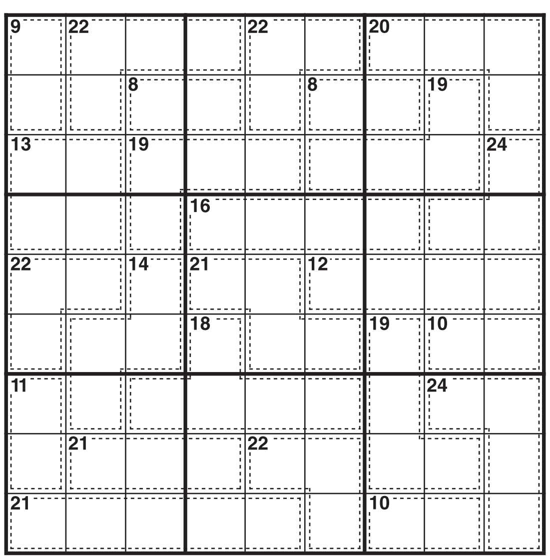
Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Moderate No 8641



Killer Deadly No 8642



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Solutions

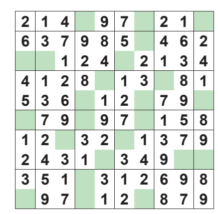
Quick Cryptic 2288



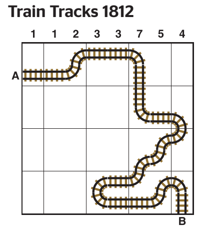
Codeword 4772



Kakuro 3328



Train Tracks 1812



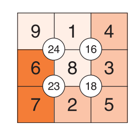
Sudoku 13,698

5	3	8	6	2	1	9	7	4
4	7	1	8	9	3	5	2	6
2	6	9	7	5	4	8	3	1
6	1	4	2	7	5	3	9	8
7	9	3	4	6	8	1	5	2
8	5	2	3	1	9	4	6	7
9	2	5	1	4	7	6	8	3
3	4	6	5	8	2	7	1	9
1	8	7	9	3	6	2	4	5

Quintagram

1 Am-dram
2 Em dash
3 Camden
4 Dumdum
5 Slam dunk

Suko 3674



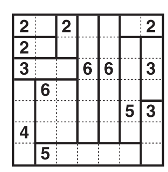
Brain Trainer

Easy 18; Medium 1,023; Harder 3,012

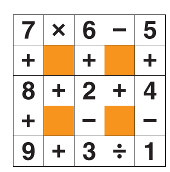
Sudoku 13,699

9	1	4	7	5	8	3	2	6
6	5	8	3	9	2	1	4	7
7	2	3	6	1	4	9	8	5
2	9	5	1	3	7	4	6	8
1	4	6	9	8	5	2	7	3
3	8	7	4	2	6	5	9	1
5	3	2	8	6	9	7	1	4
8	7	9	5	4	1	6	3	2
4	6	1	2	7	3	8	5	9

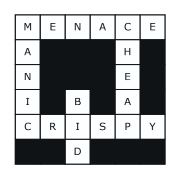
Cell Blocks 4655



Set Square 3331



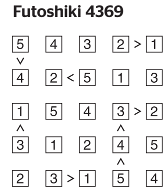
Lexica 6657



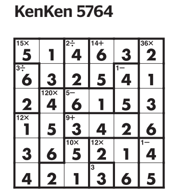
Sudoku 13,700

5	1	2	8	3	9	7	4	6
6	3	7	1	4	2	9	8	5
8	4	9	5	7	6	1	3	2
1	6	8	7	9	3	2	5	4
2	7	3	6	5	4	8	9	1
9	5	4	2	8	1	3	6	7
3	9	5	4	2	7	6	1	8
4	2	6	3	1	8	5	7	9
7	8	1	9	6	5	4	2	3

Futoshiki 4369



KenKen 5764



Lexica 6658



Killer 8639

1	5	4	3	2	6	7	8	9
9	7	2	5	1	8	6	4	3
3	6	8	4	9	7	2	1	5
7	2	9	8	5	3	4	6	1
5	8	6	9	4	1	3	7	2
4	1	3	6	7	2	9	5	8
8	9	1	7	3	4	5	2	6
2	4	5	1	6	9	8	3	7
6	3	7	2	8	5	1	9	4

Tetonor 318

390 (10 x 39)	29 (15 + 14)	210 (15 x 14)	41 (21 + 20)
43 (33 + 10)	420 (20 x 21)	100 (95 + 5)	480 (12 x 40)
475 (5 x 95)	49 (39 + 10)	330 (33 x 10)	52 (40 + 12)
44 (28 + 16)	448 (16 x 28)	46 (12 + 34)	408 (34 x 12)

Word watch

Twoccing (a) Breaking into and stealing a vehicle (Taking Without Owner's Consent) (*Collins*)
Krantz (a) A crown of rock on a mountain (*Chambers*)
Toxodon (b) A large extinct hoofed mammal (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 Bf6! combines play against g7 with back rank threats. After 1 ... gxf6 (1 ... Rg8 2 Qxg7+! Rxg7 3 Rd8 mate) 2 exf6 Rg8 3 Qxg8+! (3 Rd8 also works) 3 ... Kxg8 4 Rd8 is mate

Killer 8640

7	3	5	6	8	4	9	1	2
8	9	6	2	1	7	3	4	5
4	1	2	5	9	3	8	7	6
5	4	1	3	2	8	6	9	7
2	6	7	4	5	9	1	3	8
9	8	3	7	6	1	5	2	4
3	2	8	1	7	5	4	6	9
1	7	9	8	4	6	2	5	3
6	5	4	9	3	2	7	8	1

Quiz

1 Trunk **2** Alfred the Great **3** Mao Zedong **4** Monday **5** *Swallows and Amazons* **6** Germaine Greer **7** Vitamin A **8** *Sense and Sensibility* **9** Manchester **10** Dartmouth. It closed in 2011 **11** Liberia **12** Mari Trini **13** Gavi **14** Viticulture **15** Justin Rose

MindGames

Word watch
David Parfitt

Twoccing
a Breaking into and stealing a vehicle
b Conversing via Twitter
c Cleaning wool by combing

Krantz
a A crown of rock on a mountain
b A clumsy person
c An incidental character in a play

Toxodon
a A senior scholar
b A large extinct hoofed mammal
c A remedy for poisoning

Answers on page 19

Sudoku

Mild No 13,701

			5		9			1
	7			2				
		9	6		1			
7						1		6
	3	5					2	
	6	8				4		7
9			1	5		3		
4			7	9			6	
	5	6			8			

Difficult No 13,702

		4						
					7			8
6			3	9			5	7
		6		2			8	
		7	6		3		4	1
	1			5				
								9
		8	1	3				
	4	1		7		5		

Fiendish No 13,703

		1	5		9	2		4
	9	6	3				8	
				8	1	6		2
		7						
				5	4	9		8
	6	9	8				1	
		5	1		3	8		7

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Which feature of an elephant is an extended nose and lip that contains about 40,000 muscles?

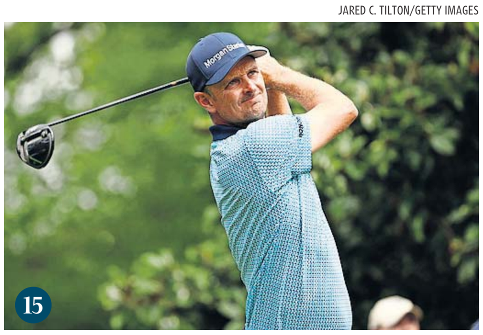
2 According to legend, which king of Wessex burnt a peasant's cakes while fleeing the Vikings?

3 In 1949, which Chinese communist leader declared the creation of the People's Republic of China?

4 *"Lunedi"* is the Italian name for which weekday?

5 *Swallowdale*, *Peter Duck* and *Winter Holiday* are the first three sequels to which 1930 novel by Arthur Ransome?

JARED C. TILTON/GETTY IMAGES



15

6 *The Change* (1991) and *The Boy* (2003) are books by which Australian feminist writer?

7 Retinal and retinol are forms of which vitamin that is essential for vision?

8 Starring Hilary Duff, the 2006 film *Material Girls* is loosely based on which Jane Austen novel?

9 The Victorian-era steel Castlefield Viaduct is in which northern city?

10 In which Devon town did Christopher Robin Milne set up The Harbour Bookshop in 1951?

11 Only three countries don't use the metric system: the USA, Myanmar and which West African country?

12 *Amores* (1970) and *Escúchame* (1971) are albums by which Spanish singer-songwriter (1947-2009)?

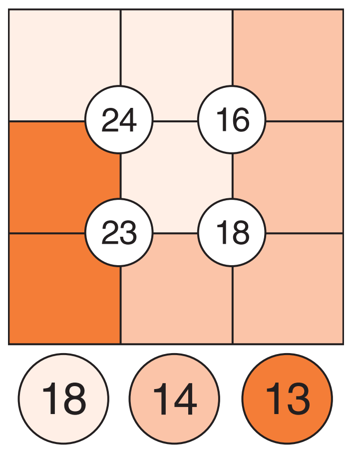
13 Sharing its name with a teenage FC Barcelona star, what is the smallest of the Pontine Islands?

14 Which 2013 board game, designed by Jamey Stegmaier and Alan Stone, is subtitled The Strategic Game of Winemaking?

15 Which English golfer is pictured?

Answers on page 19

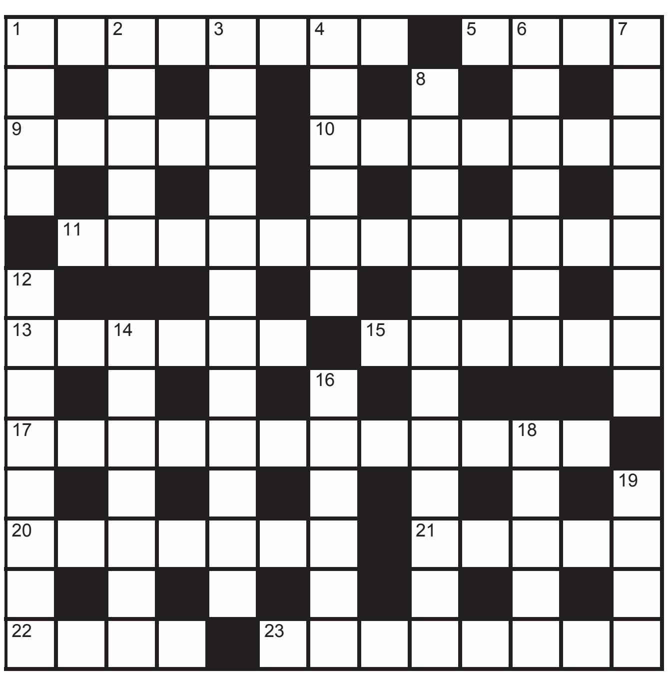
Suko
No 3674



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.co.uk

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 2289 by Izetti



Across
1 Musicians allegedly "up above" in crazy starship (8)
5 Plans to send back this unwanted message (4)
9 Power of aircraft gaining height with time (5)
10 Model wearing a medical dressing (7)
11 Rather terrible finish — it is distressing (12)
13 Cockney star twitching, arousing certain feelings (6)
15 Intellectual chaps chatter endlessly (6)
17 Communist is concealed? Must be unearthed again (12)
20 King in charge in ripped hat (7)
21 Royal family toured abroad, exuding energy (5)
22 Sailor that may be sitting on meal table (4)
23 Whingers upset composer (8)

Down
1 House with yours truly? (4)
2 Travelling groupie not very good — a baddy (5)
3 Time for a break in Bury campaign (12)
4 Wicked things gradually coming to an end? (6)
6 Irishman maybe leading disturbance: one proud of his country? (7)
7 Plant circle around which mad girl frolics (8)
8 Terribly unsettled era in places with rapid revolutions! (12)
12 Rubbish I trusted foolishly (8)
14 Ancient fellow in the police force (3,4)
16 Pretty German city, that is (6)
18 Fund to conclude with expression of pain (5)
19 Club choir, one lacking some parts (4)

*Yesterday's solution on page 19**

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